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Memoirs and Remains

OF THE LATE

REV. CHARLES BUCK,

CONTAINING

COPIOUS EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY,

AND

INTERESTING LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS;

INTERSPERSED WITH

Various Observations, explanatory and illustrative of his Character and Works.

BY JOHN STYLES, D. D.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY ANTHONY FINLEY,
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1817.

TO

HIS WIDOW AND CHILDREN,

TO THE

CHURCH WHICH HE FORMED,

AND OVER WHICH

HE PRESIDED TILL HIS DEATH;

AND TO THE

NUMEROUS READERS AND ADMIRERS OF

HIS WORKS;

THESE

MEMOIRS AND REMAINS

OF THE LATE

REV. CHARLES BUCK,

ARE RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION, - - - - - - 9

CHAP. I.

From his birth to his entering upon a course of study at Hoxton Academy, - - 15

CHAP. II.

From Mr. Buck's entering upon preparatory studies for the ministry, to his settlement at Sheerness, - - - - - 105

CHAP. III.

From the commencement of Mr. Buck's labours at Sheerness to his removal from thence to Hackney, - - - - 230

CHAP. IV.

The settlement of Mr. Buck at Hackney.—His removal to London.—His various labours, publications, and death, - - 290

Conclusion, - - - - - - 361

PREFACE.

THE Author sincerely hopes, that the delay of this Publication, occasioned by severe and long-protracted domestic affliction, will not prove injurious to the Family for whose benefit it is intended. The life of an eminently pious man, faithfully written, can never be out of date: the interest which it excites is neither local nor temporary. Recollections of such a man as CHARLES BUCK will be always most grateful to his friends and instructive to the world, especially to the rising ministry. By permanent memorials of the great and good we retain their examples, after the individuals themselves have entered upon their reward. A work of this nature takes its station in the moral heavens, and according to its magnitude and lustre, contributes its proportion of that light which guides and allures the Christian to his immortal destiny.

BRIGHTON,
February 25, 1817.

MEMOIRS AND REMAINS,

&c. &c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

CHARLES BUCK is so peculiarly endeared to the religious public, both by his preaching and writings, that his name will be long cherished with affectionate remembrance. Those who beheld, admired, and loved him, during his luminous, useful, and rapid transition from earth to heaven, must naturally desire some lasting memorial of his worth; and the multitudes who have already derived the most valuable benefits from his numerous productions, through the medium of the press, and others to whom, in future times, they may administer instruction and comfort, will of course eagerly enquire, how HE lived and died to whose labours they feel themselves so greatly indebted.

On this account I am persuaded, that in undertaking to execute a portraiture of this respectably gifted and most excellent man, I am rendering no mean service to the Church of Christ.

The biography of good and useful ministers may excite little interest in a world which crucified their holy and benevolent Master. To the generality of mankind the tale may appear altogether insipid which narrates the work of grace upon the heart of an individual, and the labours and sufferings of that individual in promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God; but those whose minds are chiefly attracted by the invisible realities of eternity, will greatly prefer it to the most fascinating productions which describe the mere hero or philosopher. No species of writing is better calculated for impression and salutary effect than this; and though there must necessarily be a great degree of sameness in the principles, experience, and conduct of those who embrace the same profession, and are placed in similar circumstances, it is considerably relieved by the peculiarities of the individual which distinguish him from his class; and with whatever disadvantages it may perplex the biographer, who often feels a painful consciousness that he is walking in a path so beaten, and is surrounded with scenery so familiar, that he can scarcely hope to awaken, much less to reward, attention; yet he is encouraged by the reflection, that the subject of his narrative is presented to his readers under the character of a *witness*, to give testimony to the reality and power of true religion in the heart, that his testimony must there-

fore substantially agree with the evidence of former witnesses, and that so far the absence of novelty is amply supplied. For my own part, as a man, I am so attached to the study of human nature, that he who exhibits only a single variety of the species, or merely adds another specimen, in my opinion confers an important benefit upon mankind; and as a Christian, I feel so deep an interest in viewing *sanctified* human nature, under all the forms and operations of religious principle, that every memoir which brings this prominently before me, however defective and uninteresting in other respects, I uniformly deposit among my most precious intellectual treasures.

In this point of view, the imperfect narrative which Mr. Buck has bequeathed to his family and the church, but which he did not live to finish, is of the greatest value. The perusal cannot fail to impress us with the conviction that he was a man of God; that in his preaching and writings he delivered the sentiments and displayed the feelings of his heart. The sphere of professional light which he threw around him was only the reflection of his personal virtues and piety. May we follow him as he followed Christ! From the papers which lie before me, it is evident that Mr. Buck did not draw up a circumstantial account of his life merely for his own use. That he intended to prepare a volume of this nature for the press, is clear, from the following observations, which are written in a book of memoranda, containing a title-page for his projected work; and as it is my intention, as far as it is practicable,

to exhibit the deceased in his own language, with these extracts I shall close my introductory remarks:

"If the conversion of a soul be the glory of God; the triumph of the Redeemer; the work of the divine Spirit; the joy of angels; the accomplishment of the promise; the delight of the church; and a present and everlasting blessing to the individual himself; then to hear of such conversion must be peculiarly pleasant to every pious mind.

"Those who publish their own lives, it may be said, have great ideas of themselves; they are afraid they shall find no biographer after they are dead; they want to hear their own praises; and besides, they may fall into disgrace yet before they die, which will eclipse all they have done and said. To all this, however, it may be answered—

"1. That if the memoir have any tendency to show the displays of grace, and to set forth the glory of God, as promoted even by feeble instruments, the sooner it is known the better.

"2. If some had not written and published their own lives, they never would have been written or published at all. Manuscripts are sometimes mislaid, burnt, neglected by survivors, mutilated; not always decyphered with care.

"3. It is not novel; Newton, Scott, and many others have set the example in our own times, and in many respects a man can publish his own life, as far as it goes, better than another person can do it for him.

"4. But there ought to be something remarkable, in order to justify an individual in taking such a step? If the sovereign displays of divine Providence be worthy of attention; if the conversion of a soul be any thing remarkable; if the raising up from obscurity an instrument comparatively mean, and rendering him useful in the world; if great mercies have been received; and if heavy afflictions have been sanctified, a man may be forgiven, perhaps, for not delaying the account to the last, or consigning it to the hands of others; he may be excused for being anxious to say himself, in the vigour of his faculties, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and *I will tell* you what he hath done for my soul."

MEMOIRS, &c.

CHAP. I.

From his Birth to his entering upon a Course of Study at Hoxton Academy.

The Rev. Charles Buck, like most of the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, was born not of opulent, but of respectable parents. His native place is a small village, called Hillsley, near Wotton Underedge, Gloucestershire. He was the last child but one, by the second husband, of his mother, and he dates his birth in the year 1771. He was early placed at a boarding school in the same village, superintended by the Rev. William Hitchman, a dissenting minister of the Baptist persuasion. Of this excellent man, now forgotten, or known only in the fading annals of the neighbourhood, where for many years he acted a conspicuous part, Mr. Buck has given the following account:—"In addition to his labours as a preacher, he laid himself out for general usefulness in this and the surrounding places. There was hardly any thing that he could not do.

The weak and superstitious consulted him in the hour of alarm; parents sent their profligate sons to him to be instructed and reformed; the watchmaker employed him to make calculations; farmers engaged him to measure their lands, in which I often used to assist him. He studied pharmacy, and could mix a medicine, extract a tooth, and use the lancet as well as many gentlemen of the profession. He gave advice to the poor, made the wills of those who possessed property, and was ready to do good to all. He could construct a weather-glass, draw a map, and make an almanack. He was a very assiduous cultivator of his garden and orchard, and was no stranger to the science of botany. Above all, he was a good man, and shone as a light in a dark village for many years."

Under the care of Mr. Hitchman our young friend was initiated into the common branches of what is generally called an English education. He attended the ministry of his tutor, and obtained by this means some knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and acquired the important habit of paying an outward reverence to the Sabbath. Partial and transient convictions were also occasionally produced on his mind, and he mentions composing a prayer and a hymn, which, when shown to his mother, excited the good woman's astonishment.

The sudden death of his youngest sister, and the almost equally unexpected departure of his father about three weeks afterwards, in the bed where himself was sleeping at the time, solemnly affected him, chilled his soul with momentary horror, and

an apprehension of that dread something after death, gave him "pause;" yet he observes, "no convictions I had received seemed to be of a lasting nature."

He left school about the age of thirteen, and was so captivated by the vanities of the world, as entirely to give himself up to amusement and folly. Dancing was his favourite pleasure, in which he once indulged to such excess, that his life had well nigh fallen a sacrifice. During his juvenile years he experienced repeated deliverances from various imminent dangers, which he devoutly ascribes to the superintending care of the Almighty. "By the providence of God (says he) I was spared through all, so that I could say with Job, 'thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.'" In the year 1785, he left his native village, and visited London. Of the magnificence and splendour of the metropolis he had heard so much, that he greatly longed to traverse its streets, that he might survey its grand and lofty buildings: but the city of his imagination, and that which actually rose before his view at the close of his anxious journey were utterly dissimilar. This he has recorded among his earliest disappointments. The instance is trivial, and may excite a smile; yet perhaps some of our most painful emotions may be traced to the same source. We need not to be told that those are moments of anguish in which the dream of Fancy vanishes before the comparatively dull realities of life, and that the pleasures of hope are almost the only pleasures which the objects it anticipates ever

afford; that in possession these objects avenge themselves by inflicting the pangs of disappointment on the heart that in expectation was weak enough to make them the depository of its happiness.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

In London Mr. Buck sought and soon obtained a situation which not only accorded with the views of his affectionate parent, who had accompanied him, but was also perfectly congenial with his own wishes. He was admitted into the office of an attorney, where he devoted himself to the study and practice of the law. "I was always (he observes) from a child remarkably fond of my pen and the desk, and remember, in very early age, an impression on my mind, that if ever I could obtain a room, with a desk to write on, I should be the happiest of beings." Here Mr. Buck conducted himself with such a sacred regard to honesty and punctuality, that, though his salary at first was very small, he was soon favoured with increased advantages, and gained the fullest confidence of his employers. "I was determined (says he) to be punctual and honest, and from my own experience I can most earnestly recommend to all young persons who wish to rise to any degree of respectability in life, who are desirous of being successful in the world, and useful to society, to observe these two things; these have advanced many a man who entered London with scarcely a shilling in his pocket, to circumstances of opulence and stations of influence."

The account of his usual manner of spending his

leisure hours up to the period of his conversion, Mr. Buck shall relate in his own language. "I have observed before, that very early I was too fond of public amusements. Being now in London, I gave full range to my desires, and here every thing met my most ardent wishes. What I had seen of theatrical exhibitions in the country were all nothing compared with those in town: now I was gratified indeed, and almost every evening found me at the theatre, or some other place of gay resort. This, however, I soon discovered to be pernicious, and though I am no enemy to amusements of a proper kind, yet in these the temptations are so fascinating, and the danger so great, that I would warn all young persons to avoid the snare. I have trodden the ground, and know what it is. Character, property, health, peace, conscience, are too often sacrificed at this altar. At this time I was just about launching into all the dissipations and licentiousness of the profligate. Sometimes, indeed, I attended the church on the morning of the Sabbath; but the Park, the Mall, the public gardens, were my resort in the after part of the day. I had some few friends in London, but none of them pious: my mother had retired again into the country, and I was left without any faithful instructor, monitor, or guide; I therefore pursued my course, exposed to every temptation, and on the very brink of destruction."

Fascinated, carried away by the impetuous torrent of what the apostle Paul denominates "the course of this world," how wonderful was the counteracting energy of divine grace, which in a moment

arrested the progress of this gay and thoughtless trifler, drew him from the gulf into which he was about to be hurried, a gulf in which thousands perished, perhaps, at the very moment when he was saved, and into which myriads of the human race are daily sinking to rise no more. Well might he exclaim, in reference to this most important event in his life, " Behold a miracle!" In truth, every instance of conversion deserves this character. It is a supernatural display of the power of God, which is as contrary to the common course of Providence as the standing still of the sun and moon, and the quickening of the dead. There is also usually such inadequacy between the means and the end, that human agency is lost in the manifestation of divine interposition, and he must be blind to the natural operation of causes, which can never produce effects beyond and above themselves, who does not recognize the finger of God in that change which Mr. Buck was now brought to experience. He thus describes its circumstances and consequences.

" A respectable gentleman,* who was blind, visited the family where I resided. This gentleman was serious; and a young man usually accompanied him not much older than myself, who was likewise a sincere and zealous Christian. Not having any particular social companion, this youth was recommended to me as a fit person. We soon became acquainted. One evening we took a walk together to

* Mr. Thomas Atkins. Mr. Buck, in the year 1812, published a very interesting memoir of his life and death.

Blackfriars Bridge, and there, perhaps, I may say, I first received my saving impressions. My young friend began discoursing on religious subjects. As we were talking on the joys of heaven, and the future misery of the wicked, I was irresistibly struck with the thought—"What a degree of folly must I be guilty of to pursue wickedness, and be miserable at last, and not to follow holiness, and be happy for ever in a better world!" I could not easily get rid of this reflection, it came home to my heart; I saw I was a sinner, and that it was high time for me to implore mercy, and seek the things which are above. —I mentioned my feelings to my companion: he was pleased, and gave me every encouragement and advice he could. We separated. I went home with new feelings, which I shall never forget. I am no great friend to very sudden conversions; perhaps in my own case the seed might have been sown while sitting under an evangelical ministry at school. And here I would suggest the propriety of parents placing out their children where they may be in the habit of hearing the gospel continually. It is of the last importance; for though no effects may be visible at first, yet conviction may be wrought, knowledge communicated, the scriptures rendered familiar, and prejudice removed, so that at last, under the divine blessing, it may tend to the happiest results. In many instances this has been realized, while multitudes of parents who have been negligent as to this point have had to deplore the infidelity, profaneness, and disobedience of their offspring."

" But to return. After this interesting conversation, when I arrived at home, instead of employing myself as usual, in trifles, I began to rummage about for a Bible, and to my great joy at last found one. I shall never forget the pleasing sensations with which I opened that blessed book. It was like a new world to me. I began to read as one that was interested; my whole soul was engaged in it. My companion soon after finding this, made me a present of a Bible, in which there were some of his marks attached to particular texts, which had either been explained from the pulpit, or which in their perusal had afforded him peculiar instruction or consolation. This method I also adopted; and it is with great pleasure I sometimes turn over the leaves of this friend and guide of my youth, where I behold many passages, which recall some of the most exquisite enjoyments of my happiest days. I seem to live these delightful seasons over again, and though in the review of all the past I cannot but be deeply humbled, these are bright spots, illumined by the splendour of heavenly wisdom and mercy, which exhilirate my soul amidst the dreary waste of mis-spent time and mercies unimproved."

" Thus I seemed to have been drawn by the cords of love and the bands of a man, rather than by any violent terrors or great agitations of mind. Thus the Almighty acts as a sovereign. Some he visits with the most dreadful and pungent convictions, while others are gently constrained to enter upon this holy and delightful career.

" But it may be asked, Does conversion make a

man an angel? Does it at once, or ever in the present world, transform him from all that is base into a perfect creature? Surely not. The work of regeneration, or the communication of the divine principle of life, may be considered as instantaneous; but the effects are not all visible at once. There is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. Every thing grand and magnificent, both in art and nature, has been and is produced in a progressive manner; so I believe it is with religion, or the work of God on the mind of man. It begins in conversion, proceeds in sanctification, and is perfected in heavenly glory." It is impossible for a mind imbued with the knowledge of the scriptures, and with the spirit of evangelical piety, not to accede to these very clear and just views of Mr. Buck, on a subject which has excited more of the "*Odium Theologicum*," than almost any other in the whole system of divinity. How remote are they from the arrogant claims of Arminianism on the one hand, and the degrading absurdities of Antinomianism on the other! The one theory maintains the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life; the other affirms, that conversion produces no renovation of the depraved heart of man, and that "growth in grace" is impossible. As the latter error is by far the most prevalent, because it is most congenial with the unholy principles of our nature, I shall digress a little more at length, in order to expose its pernicious and unscriptural character. The advocates of this delusion seem entirely to forget the apostle's declaration; "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new crea-

ture; old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new." According to them, the phrase " *is* a new creature," ought to be changed into *has* a new creature; and instead of " old things are passed away," it ought to read, " old things," that is, " old principles, old habits, remain in all their inveteracy." Misunderstanding, or grievously perverting the energetic and impassioned language of St. Paul, when he describes his inward and violent conflicts, when he speaks of grace as distinct from nature and opposed to it, they contend that a man is as unholy and corrupt after his conversion as he was before; that in fact he is the subject of no divine change; but that a new, an uncongenial, and as far as regards the carnal mind, an inoperative nature is placed within him; just as a Bible may be bound up in the same volume between Paine's Age of Reason and Rousseau's Confessions, without imparting any of its truth or purity to the infidel and unholy productions with which it is most heterogeneously combined; nay, it is more strangely maintained by these misguided individuals, that the principle of spiritual life in a believer has no other relation to his depravity than to exhibit and inflame it. When this statement is opposed, when the very texts of scripture on which they rely are quoted against themselves, and a body of irresistible evidence compels them to relinquish every form of legitimate argument, they turn round upon us with an air of triumph, and ask the sapient questions— Is not flesh still flesh? Is the old man with his affections and lusts changed? Is he not altogether a dif-

ferent being from the "new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?"—Now it appears to me, that this is totally giving up the point in question, or involving a plain subject in unnecessary ambiguity. We affirm, according to the scriptures, that the human nature experiences a spiritual renovation in every case of real conversion, and those who contradict this statement flatter themselves that they completely overturn our hypothesis, by maintaining that flesh cannot be converted into spirit, nor sin into holiness. But do the advocates of the reality of a change of heart, as implied in the very essence of regeneration, contend for any thing so ineffably absurd as identifying flesh and spirit, sin and holiness? Certainly not. The change for which we plead does not alter the nature of what is meant by the flesh, as distinguished from the spirit, nor does it transmute sin into any thing different from itself; but it brings the flesh into subjection to the spirit, and counteracts the principles of sin in the heart, by enlightening the understanding, purifying the affections, and determining the will. The change consists in light in the understanding, holiness in the heart, and virtue in the actions. Thus it is radical, and affects the grand component parts and characteristic faculties of our nature. Perhaps this change cannot be better described than in the language of the judicious Dr. Witherspoon, whose treatise on Regeneration cannot be too strongly recommended.

"Regeneration is the recovery of the moral image of God upon the heart; that is to say, to love

him supremely, and serve him ultimately as our highest end, and to delight in him superlatively as our chief good." That the tendency of this principle is to growth and increase, and that wherever it is communicated, it is distinguished by progress and gradual advancement, cannot be doubted, whether we reason from analogy, from scriptural precepts and examples, or from observation and experience. The argument I must not now pursue; but shall merely continue the quotation from Dr. Witherspoon:—"This recovery however, is but begun on earth; it is gradually improved in the progress of sanctification, and shall be fully completed at the resurrection of the just. The sum of the moral law is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. This is the duty of every rational creature; and in order to obey it perfectly, no part of our inward affection or actual service ought to be, at any time, or in the least degree, misapplied. This is the case with no mere man while he continues in the body. But regeneration consists in the principle being implanted, obtaining the ascendancy, and habitually prevailing over its opposite."

Under its operation the soul, in all its powers, remains essentially the same, and the depravity with which it has been polluted is unchanged in its nature; but these powers are regulated by new principles, and have received a new direction, and this depravity is lessened in degree. As the new man increases in strength, the old man, to use the apostle's language, is "put off;" but this yields no occasion

for self-gratulation. Advancement in holiness cannot minister to pride. It is the work of God; it is one of the richest blessings of our salvation; the more valuable the obligation, the more profound should be our humility. It is not possible to grow in grace without becoming more humble, without additional self-loathing; indeed, increasingly to discover our in-bred corruptions, and proportionably to distrust and abhor ourselves, on this account, is part of that growth in grace which is essential to all personal religion. Perhaps the very acmè of meetness for a state of glory consists in the union of a clear perception, and vehement abhorrence of our sinfulness,—a perfect and exclusive resting for justification on the infinite merits of our blessed Redeemer,—and an intense desire after communion with God in his immaculate purity. But it is time to resume the narrative of Mr. Buck.—Immediately subsequent to the remarks which led to this digression, he proceeds—

"After what I have said of the delight I found in perusing the Bible, it will be naturally supposed, that from that moment I had renounced the world: so, perhaps, I had intentionally; but in a week or two after, the old temptation was presented, and it was suggested to my mind, that there would be no harm in occasionally attending public amusements. This induced me to make the experiment; and, shame to me while I say it, the very evening my new companion came to spend with me, I pleaded an excuse of being engaged. He left me, and I set off to the theatre. Here, however, I was miserable; still

I tried once more, but it would not do. I was so terrified at the thought, that if death or judgment should find me here, how deplorable would be my condition. I therefore left the place, wounded in my conscience, and determined to go no more. I soon became more decided, and refused all solicitations of this kind. This was immediately discovered by my friends and acquaintance: persecution commenced, opprobrious epithets were used, ridicule employed, temptations placed in my way, the Bible thrown at my head,* but all to no effect. That passage in the fifth of Matthew, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness-sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," was a great support to my mind, and I cheerfully endured all the reproaches and contempt cast upon me.

"No sooner had I become a little courageous and decided, than a new temptation assailed me; and perhaps it is not uncommon to young converts. I was dreadfully harassed with the thought that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, because I remembered that once when I was a school-boy, I had, in a moment of passion, cursed the Bible. I was also tempted at this very time to blaspheme the Holy Ghost: this filled me with great distress; but by the suitable advice and consolation of my companion, I was delivered from these painful feelings."

Should the eye of a sincere and humble enquirer,

* The very person who did this was afterwards, by the blessing of God, on my reasoning and exhortation, brought under conviction; prejudice subsided, and I hope he is now in glory.

similarly tried, fall upon this page of Mr. Buck's experience, I would, in order to relieve him from an anxiety which once preyed upon my own mind, suggest a train of enquiry and reflection, which, under a divine blessing, effectually vanquished all my terrors.

The alarm which I felt on first reading the terrible denunciation which is the exclusive penalty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, arose from a union of ignorance of the nature of this sin in particular, with deep conviction of the evil of sin in general. In this state of feeling, I ruminated on the tremendous qualities of this offence, "which never hath forgiveness," and remembering that I had often deliberately transgressed, in spite of the loud remonstrances of my conscience, and in violation of the most solemn and frequently repeated resolutions; that I had rejected the offers of salvation, and laboured to drown the anguish of my spirit, by plunging into the follies of the world, I concluded that I had been guilty of this dreadful and unpardonable blasphemy; but connecting fervent prayer with a serious view of the whole case, as related by the Evangelist, taking especially into consideration the circumstances in which the denunciation originated, and the character of the persons to whom it was immediately addressed, I was at length persuaded that it was a crime chargeable only upon the scribes and pharisees, who, witnessing the mighty miracles which Jesus wrought, ascribed them to Satanic influence; and that it can never be again repeated in the same degree of heinousness, with the same ag-

gravations, or incurring the same awful and hopeless sentence of condemnation.*

Immediately after narrating this distressing temptation, Mr. Buck proceeds to observe—

"Before I leave this part, let me remark, how various are the means which the Almighty is pleased to use to illuminate the minds and impress the hearts of his people. Some are called under severe dispensations of Providence, by sickness, losses, bereavements, disappointments, changes in life; others by the example of those around them; some by reading the Scriptures; most by hearing the gospel publicly preached; but if ever my mind was seriously and truly impressed, it was, as I have before said, by conversation. I had, it is true, heard the gospel before, but to little or no effect. Let me then, here,

* The following observations, extracted from a sermon by the Rev. Joshua Moreton, on this subject, are illustrative of the principle which I have assumed, and I therefore insert them in this place.

"To consider this possible, (that is, the perpetration of this crime,) you must be supposed to have lived on earth with Jesus Christ; you must have had an opportunity of thoroughly knowing his character; you must have heard his mighty words, and seen his mightier works; and after all, you must have done violence to the full conviction of your minds: you must, for ends merely selfish and political, have rejected every evidence offered to confirm the mission of the Son of God; you must have maliciously denied the evidence of your senses; and whilst the surrounding multitude were acknowledging that God was with him, you must daringly have affirmed that he cast out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. These circumstances laid together, will, I trust, have a tendency to convince you, that you *are* not, that you cannot be, subject to the sentence denounced in my text."

most ardently press it upon all ministers and Christians to drop a word in season, (I mean not that we should cast pearls before swine, and there is certainly a prudence to be observed in this;) but there are sometimes favourable seasons, opportunities, circumstances, occasions, in which something may be said to promote the grand object, and who can tell, *a word* may lodge a conviction, or make an impression never to be forgotten."

"Like most young converts, I was now filled with zeal, and thought I could easily convert others. I sent letters to my mother, informing her of the change, and most solemnly intreating her to consider her own state. I hope and believe that these efforts were not altogether fruitless. My mother, always friendly to morality, was pleased to hear how I was disposed; for she had been greatly tried by my two elder brothers, who both violated their indentures, and became profligate. She was in a state of severe affliction at this time; but my letters, it seems, afforded her great consolation. The neighbours who knew me when I was a child came to hear them read: at last came the curate of the parish to inspect them; but he, I fear, not knowing much, said "they were all very well, but rather methodistical." Such was my zeal, that I not only wished to convert my mother, but I drew up an address to the whole village, calling upon them to repent, and turn to God; but, alas! "Old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon."

About this time, when Mr. Buck was little more than fifteen years of age, he attempted to address a

few pious friends, thus discovering that propension to the work of the ministry, without which there certainly cannot be a scriptural call to engage in it. In his juvenile exhortations he began by using notes, which he had carefully prepared, but soon after finding great liberty in speaking, he altogether laid them aside. In his first effort he felt himself abashed and discouraged; but the persuasions of his friends, and his own determined zeal, induced him to persevere, till every difficulty was surmounted.

At the period when Mr. Buck entered upon his religious course, this method of introducing inexperienced youths into the pulpit was by no means uncommon. A young man no sooner became a Christian, or entered upon a Christian profession, than he was deemed qualified to teach, by the companions of his own age, and a few elderly gossips, honoured by the appellation of "mothers in Israel." However slender his gifts, or deficient his knowledge, if he could only open his mouth, and ring changes on a set of cant phrases, and a few theological dogmas, which he could neither correctly state, prove, nor defend, he was hailed by the title of "Reverend," sprucely attired in a suit of "inky," sometimes of rusty black, and exhibited to admiring multitudes as a modern wonder. The baneful influence of all this on the character of the individual may be easily imagined. He that might have been, in a retired sphere of life, a humble and useful member of the church and of society, or, under proper treatment, a good minister of Christ, thrust forward by an overweening idea of his own qualifications, and

the injudicious zeal of his friends, is converted into a pragmatical or solemn coxcomb, fit neither for heaven nor earth. Invested with the character of a public instructor, when he ought to be sitting at the feet of some christian Gamaliel, he imagines himself to belong to a superior order of intellect, or to be favoured with an extraordinary measure of divine assistance. The admiration of the ignorant he views as the test of excellence, and is soon flattered into a persuasion that he possesses a mind that requires not the culture of study, and a heart that is too spiritual to need the vigilant drudgery of self-examination. Many a novice of this description has fallen into the condemnation of the devil; and many a youth who might have been an able minister of the New Testament, if he had submitted to a regular course of discipline and education, has been rendered ridiculous and useless by the folly that made him a preacher, before God had made him a man.

The experience of half a century has at length brought this method of filling our pulpits into merited disrepute. The *general* effect has been so injurious to the cause of religion, that almost every party is now establishing its seminaries for the education of a rising ministry, thus guarding its churches against indiscriminate admission into the sacred office. It is now an axiom among us all, "that those who will not learn, shall not teach." The cant about receiving ministers immediately from the Lord, because they are taken from the plough-tail and the shop-board to preside in our religious assemblies, produces nausea in every stomach, except that of

the Antinomian monster, whose gastric power can digest "all noxious, all prodigious things." The conviction is now universal, that the teachers of christian theology should understand the various duties of their profession, and be eminently imbued with scriptural knowledge; that a minister must not only be a Christian, but a divine, and that a thorough acquaintance with divinity can only be attained by a long and persevering course of laborious study. In making these observations, the writer would not be understood to insinuate that useful, and even eminent ministers, have not arisen out of the very system which he has felt it to be his duty to reprobate. These, however, are comparatively very few, and are to be considered as extraordinary instances of superior intellect and piety; they arose to distinction, not in virtue of the circumstances which led them into the ministry, but in *spite* of them. Hurried into an office, to the duties of which they were sincerely devoted, they were soon convinced of the necessity either of educating themselves under every possible disadvantage, or of taking refuge in an academy, where they might, with greater facility, obtain the qualifications, the want of which they so deeply deplored. Nor are the early and comparatively private efforts of individuals, who are inclined to the ministry, to be censured, when they are made before competent judges, and with a view to academical preparation. If the mind has not a strong and uncontrollable bias towards preaching; if there be not a natural aptitude to teach, and an ardent thirst after every kind of knowledge, which

may, by possibility, shed lustre on the office to which the youthful candidate aspires, he will never be very eminent or very useful; where these qualities exist they will not fail to manifest themselves, nor will judicious ministers and churches discourage their appearance—they will rather kindly cherish them, and wisely direct their application.

It was the happiness of Mr. Buck to rise above the disadvantages of his first introduction into the ministry; the temptations and the dangers which were fatal to many of his contemporaries he was enabled to escape. He possessed a natural *tact* of good sense, and his heart was right with God. His early preaching, therefore, only prepared him to receive with greater avidity the instructions of a college, and was the means of fitting him for his public work at a period when others usually commence their studies. A circumstance which demands our grateful acknowledgment to the mercy of his Saviour; his ministerial course was not short, although he died in the vigour of his age.

Of the character of his first performances he thus speaks: "My knowledge was very scanty, my ideas of scripture not correct, nor had I any proper notion of sermonizing. I have the plans or notes still by me, and cannot but sometimes smile in reviewing them. I preserve them by way of humiliation, though indeed my intention was good, and my heart full of zeal. I confess I look back with pleasure on these meetings, for however defective we were in knowledge, they were meetings of devotion, and in some degree laid the foundation of the habit of

public speaking; and though I do not approve of raw youths mounting the rostrum, yet I think it is better for them to meet for conversation, prayer, and exhortation, than to stand alone; at least I can say that I found the advantage."

Mr. Buck's first extempore sermon was delivered in an apartment in Bedford-house, Bloomsbury-square, in the year 1787, to which service he was invited by a young man who then lived in that noble mansion. On a review of this part of his history he exclaims, "How numerous are the changes here! This superb edifice is entirely pulled down, and the mortal remains of this young man are at the bottom of the sea. I never walk across the square above mentioned without reflecting on former times. —This youth and myself, on a summer's morning, used to meet in the fields at five or six o'clock, where we exhorted and endeavoured to instruct each other; though it was some distance for me to go, yet the pleasure I felt made me forget every inconvenience. How true is it, that when one object principally attracts and interests the soul, that any sacrifice can be made, any difficulty borne to accomplish the end we desire. How often have I said, Give me but the zeal of my first days, and what is there that I cannot do? That passage in the second chapter of Jeremiah, the second verse, has often affected me: "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

" At this time, 1789, I attended the ministry of Mr. Romaine* and Mr. Foster at Blackfriars Church, occasionally hearing at other places. I knew little or nothing respecting the grounds of difference between Churchmen and dissenters, nor did I in the least inquire or trouble myself about them. I called myself a churchman. Mr. Romaine gave out, that shortly a confirmation would take place at St. Bride's Church, and that candidates for confirmation in his congregation were desired to meet him in his vestry. I began to rub up my memory afresh with the church catechism, which I had learnt in earlier years, expecting to be closely examined as to my knowledge in this particular. On the day appointed I went to the vestry, but instead of going through the catechism, he talked to us very suitably and spiritually, and then went to prayer with us, commending us all to the blessing of God. He gave tickets to each of the candidates, and I thought myself greatly honoured, mine being No. 1. The day fixed for confirmation arrived; we waited upon Mr. Romaine in the vestry, and from thence proceeded

* There was in Mr. Romaine's preaching a peculiar suavity, if I may so call it, that I never met with in any other. His subject was always one, and yet it appeared always new. I was in the habit of taking notes; but I could scarcely ever distinguish any plan, or catch any original or striking remark. Though, as I have said, the subject was always the same, yet there was a remarkable unction attending it. Every individual in an immense congregation seemed affected. His discourses were short; and after raising the feelings of his auditors to the highest pitch, there he left them; so that they generally went away, saying, " This of all Mr. Romaine's sermons was the best."

to St. Bride's, he walking first in his robes, and we following behind, where we, with vast numbers of others, were confirmed by the then bishop of Bangor. I say nothing now about the benefits of this episcopal act, but I well remember that it was a most cheerful and pleasant scene. The season of the year, the blooming countenances of the young, the largeness of the auditory, the ringing of the bells, the parents looking with affection on their children as they approached the altar to receive the hand of the venerable looking bishop; these, and many other circumstances, inspired me with delight."

"Being now confirmed, I thought my next duty was to partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. I therefore approached the table at Blackfriars Church; but hardly did ever any poor delinquent tremble more on meeting his punishment, than I did in walking up to the altar. It appeared to me of such importance, and of so holy a nature, that I seemed confounded with a sense of my unworthiness. Like many other young Christians, I had a wrong idea of it; and to me it was more a service of terror and bondage, than of joy and gratitude. I fear this is the case with many. They look upon this ordinance as somewhat different and superior to all other divine institutions; that there must be some great qualification; that if they should sin after it they are undone; that they must be divested for the season of the remains of depraved nature, and thus many are kept back; whereas we should remember, that it is the broken and contrite heart

that God will not despise, and that this is an ordinance of joy, and not of grief; of love, and not of confusion; of peace, and not of anxiety; of gratitude and triumph, and not of sullenness and melancholy."

"In July, this year, I went one evening to hear Mr. Abdy preach at Bow Church. During his sermon I found my mind rather suddenly, but very strongly impressed with the thought of entering into the ministry. I am no advocate for sudden impulses; but so it was, that this impression remained, and I mentioned it to my friend and companion, who gave me every encouragement, and promised to do all that he could in due time to further the object. He also lent me a book, entitled "Eades's Gospel Ministry," from which I trust I derived profit. About this time the life of Mr. Whitfield fell into my hands; this fired me beyond measure, and strengthened my desires for the ministry exceedingly. A sense of its importance and difficulties at times rather appalled me, but encouraged by some serious friends, I still kept the object in view."

"My heart was now set on doing good in every way I possibly could. With a friend I visited Newgate, to see a young man under sentence of death for house-breaking. He appeared on the whole penitent and attentive; but I was shocked to observe others in the same situation, in the condemned yard, apparently careless, playing at fives, as if nothing was the matter. The young man we visited was afterwards executed with several others. He came

upon the scaffold first, and, looking up towards heaven, began singing and seemed to die penitent. As these cases are sometimes doubtful, I must leave the decision to the Great Judge of all the earth."

"My desire for entering the ministry continuing, I was very anxious to cultivate my mind. My young friend was now removed to a distant academy to prepare him for that great work. I was connected with no society where I could exercise my gift, I therefore licensed a room in Black-horse Court, Fleet Street, and opened it on the 21st of January 1788, with an exhortation from 2 Chron. xv. 7. "Your work shall be rewarded." Our numbers increased, and I was assisted by several other speakers, having exhortations twice a-week. This Society lasted about ten years. Many ministers occasionally assisted, and I have great reason to believe good was done."

"About this time I was introduced to the late Rev. John Ryland. His eccentric manner, his venerable appearance, his vehement language, so overwhelmed me, that I was scarcely able to give any account of myself. By degrees, however, we became familiar, and as he resided near my place of abode for a short season, I attended him at six o'clock in the morning, and became his amanuensis. He was a man of genius, of a most vivid imagination, a determined enemy to the doctrines of Socinus, and possessed a fund of anecdote and information which rendered his company very entertaining. Had he applied himself to any one subject he would have been a proficient; but he wanted to grasp eve-

ry thing—his life of Hervey is a curious specimen of this. He was also perhaps too sanguine in his plans of teaching a shorter way to science; perhaps he thought he had discovered the royal road so much desired by some of the kings of antiquity. There are many anecdotes told of him which I believe are not altogether correct. The advice he gave me, I suppose, was the same he gave to many others;—" 1. Don't buy too many books, for that will hurt your pocket.—2. Don't sit up late at night to study, for that will hurt your constitution.—3. Don't go a courting, for that will hurt your mind."

" It may be difficult to lay down precise rules for others, but when I became serious, I was determined on two things—to be much in secret prayer, and to read a certain portion of the Scriptures every day, taking them regularly from the beginning. About Midsummer this year I finished reading them through for the first time. In private prayer I fear I sometimes placed more dependance on the length, than the propriety of it, being sometimes three quarters of an hour upon my knees. However, let me recommend to all to adopt the same resolution, of constantly reading the scriptures, and earnestly imploring the divine blessing. Such are most likely to prosper in their own souls, and to become the instruments of usefulness to others."

" Hitherto I had engaged only in giving exhortations in private, except at the room at Blackhorse Court; but a supply being wanted by the

Rev. Mr. Jackson,* at his place at Wapping, I was prevailed upon to engage for the morning and afternoon. This was the first pulpit in which I ever appeared as a preacher. I was now little more than eighteen years of age, and though full of zeal, perhaps not altogether qualified to appear in public. I met, however, with encouragement, and was shortly invited to preach at the chapel at Wandsworth on a Sabbath afternoon; this I accepted, and found great liberty in preaching. This was my second attempt, which giving satisfaction, divested me of fear, and excited me to go forward."

"In the summer of this year, 1789, I first saw Bunhill Fields: I cannot describe the impression made upon my mind on entering the gate, and observing the almost innumerable monuments of the dead; indeed, I was so struck, that I went home, sat down, and composed a paper, entitled "Thoughts in Bunhill Fields," which was printed in Mr. De Coetlogon's Miscellany. A walk in Westminster Abbey, among the illustrious dead, is solemn, but a walk in Bunhill Fields, among the pious dead, tends to awaken feelings of a delightful nature. Here are deposited the remains of an Owen, a Goodwin, a Mather, a Williams, a Watts, a Lardner, a Bunyan, a Harris, a Bragg, a Doolittle, a Jenkyn, a Grosvenor, *cum multis aliis*. Perhaps there is not a spot in Europe like this. The superintendant of the ground told me, that a gentleman came in one day,

* Mr. Jackson was afterwards settled at Warminster. He was a man of good sense, and an excellent preacher.

and said that he had been in almost all parts of the world, but he never saw a burying-place like this."

"To return. Having now fully made up my mind to enter into the ministry, I began to think in what way it could be best accomplished. I had some thoughts of entering into the connexion of Lady Huntingdon; but meeting with an acquaintance of the Rev. Mr. Wills, and communicating my intention, he persuaded me rather to wait upon him. I accordingly did so; I was kindly received, and greatly encouraged. Wishing to have some specimen of my abilities, he appointed me to speak before him and some friends, which I did at Silver Street Chapel. Somehow or other I became a great favourite, and the affection this useful minister of Christ manifested to me was beyond any thing I ever before experienced: he treated me as a son; I was welcome to his table whenever I chose; I had free access to his library, and the benefit of his advice as to the books I should read: his amiable and pious consort treated me with the same kindness, so that I became like one of the family."

"In January, 1790, Mr. Wills sent me to preach at the late Dr. Peckwell's Chapel, Westminster.* This seemed rather formidable to me, but I was enabled to go through with some degree of pleasure. I afterwards preached at Highgate by his recommendation, and finally became his assistant at Silver

* Ministers sometimes smile at the awkward phraseology of the notes put up to the pulpit. The following I received when about to preach at the above-mentioned place: "A husband begs to return Almighty God thanks for the happy deliverance of his wife out of this troublesome life."

Street Chapel. At this place I commenced a lecture at seven o'clock on Sabbath day mornings, which I continued for several years. Here I enjoyed many pleasant opportunities, and I think that good was done."

In the spring of this year Mr. Buck accompanied his friend and patron, Mr. Wills,* on a preaching-tour through Wallingford, Oxford, Bath, and Bristol. Though a stripling, he was called to address very large and attentive congregations. During this journey, he surprised the inhabitants of the village in which he was born, by appearing in the pulpit of his venerable tutor. "The time," says he, "for my preaching being arrived, I went with peculiar sensations to the old place. It was crowded to excess; curiosity brought together characters of all sorts for miles round. Some who hardly ever went either to church or meeting came. Many reprobates hovered about the place, endeavouring, if possible, to hear something, though afraid to show themselves within the walls. I preached from the third chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, eighth verse; "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Never had I such an affecting season before; it was almost too

* Mr. Wills (says Mr. Buck) was a popular and useful preacher. His figure was venerable; his voice sweet and sonorous; his subjects always evangelical; his language plain but forcible. He wept much in the pulpit, and in some respects, it is said, he resembled the celebrated Mr. Whitfield." The editor remembers hearing Mr. Wills frequently in the days of his childhood, when he was deeply and powerfully affected by the simplicity and pathos of his discourses.

much for my feelings; the people wept, and the attention was profound and universal. What interested me much, was to see some of my old acquaintance and play-fellows, who had also been brought to a knowledge of the truth since I had left. From what I afterwards heard, the word made a great impression, and I trust good was done. I could not help smiling, however, at the remarks of some of the country folks who had not been in the habit of hearing the gospel. One man said, "*O zur*, how wonderful it is! what a *deel* of *larning* you must have to go on *zo*, for an hour, without book."

"Another individual, a farmer, who lived at some distance, and scarcely ever attended a place of worship, was induced for once to go. He was quite overcome, and so deeply affected, that he said to another as he was returning home, "O, if I could but *praech* like *he*, I would go and *zell* all my cows, and go *praeching* all about the country." Whether his impressions were abiding I know not. Of an old playmate, however, whom I saw a year after on a bed of sickness, I received a very pleasant testimony of the power of what he heard on that memorable evening."

Of the entire devotedness of Mr. Buck to the work in which he was engaged, and the deep seriousness of his spirit, the journal which he kept during this tour furnishes abundant proof.

"Monday, 26th April, 1790.—Arrived at Wallingford. The country wears a pleasing aspect; the hedges are clothed in green, and the trees are beautified with the sweetest blossoms. O what delights

are there in nature, how engaging to the attention, and how pleasant to the eye. But what ravishing pleasures will there be when the everlasting spring of glory shall dawn upon me, when the cold winters and gloomy clouds will be lost, yea, lost to be found no more. O my soul, reflect on that blissful state; be not so dejected and cast down as if there were no hope. A few more winds and storms, and all will be well. Then shall I have done with all troubles, afflictions, pains, and sorrows. When Christ who is my life shall appear, then shall I appear with him in glory. O then, my soul, be patient while thou art journeying through this wilderness."

"In the evening heard the Rev. Mr. Wills expound the first chaper of 1 John. The discourse was well suited to poor distressed believers—can say it was profitable to my own soul. The people seemed to hear with attention, while tears flowed from their eyes. And ah! who can reflect on the great love of Jesus, without being affected. O thou eternal Jehovah, let me be melted down with a sense of it; may it be my favourite subject; it will be the eternal meditation of all in heaven, and why not of all here upon earth. May it be so impressed on my mind, as never to be worn off; may I live, die, and live again, in the everlasting enjoyment of it. Amen, says my soul, Amen."

"Tuesday, April 27.—Heard Mr. Wills preach from Rev. iii. 20. at Wallingford Market-place. There was a numerous and attentive audience, while the Lord seemed to manifest his presence. O that some poor sinner may be plucked as a brand from

the burning. In the evening I gave an exhortation from Isaiah, xliii. 2. at Mr. Lovegrove's; experienced a little liberty in my own soul. O for more precious seasons. How little do I taste of redeeming love, or feel of the Almighty's goodness. Blessed and adorable Redeemer! make me more lively and active in thy cause, that I may be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as I know my labour is not in vain in the Lord. Make me faithful to warn the sinner of his way, lest his blood should be required at my hand: O that I may be instant in season, and out of season ever more diligent to exhort poor souls to flee from the wrath to come."

"Wednesday, April 28.—Rode on horseback from Wallingford to Oxford, and on the way had some profitable conversation with a Christian friend. How sweet is it, when God's people are led to talk of divine things. O my soul, evermore improve such opportunities, covet the instructive conversation of real believers. Let not thy time be lost in talking of vain unbecoming subjects. Beware, O ever beware of idle and trifling words, and learn, in conversing with others, to converse more with Christ."

"Took a survey of some of the buildings in the city; but ah, what are these to the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. In the evening heard Mr. W. preach from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. The discourse was a faithful and a well suited one: I pray God to make it exceedingly useful. O what a privilege to have and to hear ministers

that keep a single eye to God's glory. Blessed Jesus! send more such if it be thy will."

"Thursday, April 29.—Went from Oxford to Bath; was much fatigued with the length of the journey. But ah, how often am I weary in travelling through this great wilderness; how do I lag behind; how slowly do I proceed; how little activity, how careless to run the race that is set before me. O thou adorable Jesus, put fresh life into my soul, that I may mount up as on eagles' wings, that I may run and not be weary, walk and not be faint. Keep me from spiritual sloth, and from bringing a disgrace on thy cause. O that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things: but O, when shall I rest, eternally rest, from all toil and labour, and arrive at my long wished for haven? When shall I be where my Jesus is, to love and praise him for ever? where sin shall no more disturb my peace or distress my soul."

"Friday, April 30.—Went to see the buildings at Bath; their magnificence and grandeur filled me with surprise: but what beauty is there in that spiritual building the Church! How strongly supported, how richly adorned, and how nicely compact; how well stored and how well protected; Jesus himself the watchman that walks around her walls, and guards the numerous inhabitants. O my soul, art thou a lively stone in this superb and elegant structure? art thou safely laid on and cemented to the head corner-stone, yea, the sure foundation. O that there I may rest in life and death, and to all eternity, even so, Amen, and Amen.

May I be found a living stone
In Salem's streets above,
And help to sing before the throne
Free grace and dying love.

"Saturday, May 1, 1790.—Arrived at Bristol; the journey was short and pleasant. Ah, how short is my stay in this world! How time glides along! Lord make me careful to improve it: but though my journey is but short, yet if I am blessed with the smiles of Christ, it is pleasant. O give me, give me thy presence, I ask no more; but if I have not that, nothing but misery will attend me.

"Sunday, May 2.—Preached at the Tabernacle this morning at seven o'clock, from 1 Peter, v. 10. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." Did not feel any great degree of liberty; but O how thankful ought I to be that God permits me to speak at all in his name. O that I may be more earnest in exhorting poor souls to look to Christ, and trust in him alone!

"Heard Rev. Mr. Wills preach at Kingswood, from Isaiah, xxxii. 17. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." O how did the poor simple souls seem to drink the word; with what joy did they hear it, while the tears flowed from their weeping eyes. They appeared to sit under his shadow with great delight, while his fruit was sweet to their taste.

"In the evening heard Mr. Wills at Tabernacle,

from Psalm iv. 6, 7. "There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." It was a large congregation, and all seemed very attentive. Lord bless the word to the conversion of sinners, and comforting thy saints. Amen.

"Monday, May 3.—In the evening preached at Tabernacle, from Isaiah, xxxii. 18. "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation." Was enabled to speak with a little freedom. O that I may be an instrument in the hands of God, of bringing sinners to a saving knowledge of the truth! May I be always careful for the souls of others, while at the same time I may not be negligent of myself. Grant me my petition, O thou blessed Jesus if it is thy will. Amen and Amen.

"Tuesday, May 4.—Went to Clifton; had some delightful prospects of the works of God in creation. In the evening heard Mr. Wills at the Society at Tabernacle; the season was very precious and comforting. O Lord, let me profit more and more in hearing thy word: suffer me not to be a dull and lifeless professor, but one that reduces the word into practice. Give me to see the awfulness of hearing the gospel, and yet not possessing it. O that I may not only hear, but know, and not only know, but be careful to practice.

"Wednesday, May 5.—Went to Redland; had some delightful views of nature. But ah, my soul; thou shalt see greater things than these, yea, even

Jesus, thy Saviour. What a ravishing sight must that be, it fills me with joy when I can behold him with an eye of faith; but what will it be when I see him face to face. In the evening heard Mr. W. at Tabernacle. O let good be done, dear Lord, and all the glory shall be thine for ever and ever.

"Thursday, May 6.—Preached at Hope Chapel, from Hebrews, xiii. 14. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Was led to show the nature of this city, and the manner of seeking it, but found rather a darkness on my mind. O that the word may bear a lasting impression, may it be as seed sown to spring up after many days. O that it may be watered by the blessed Spirit. 'Tis thy prerogative, O God, to make it effectual. Let it, dear Lord, not be a lost word, may it not return void, but be useful to every hearer. Amen.

"Friday, May 7.—Heard Mr. Wills at Tabernacle, from Rom. i. 17. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith." O that I could but hear with more pleasure and attention: how much are my thoughts wandering; how ready is my heart to start aside like a broken bow; how little do I look up to God to crown the word with his blessing. O that I may never slight such privileges, and abuse such opportunities as are put into my hands! How little am I thankful to God for his grace, his word, his ministers, his gospel, his ordinances! Wretched man that I am, to be so ungrateful to my dear Redeemer; what a mercy it is that I am not cut off as a cumberer of the ground;

for I am too much like Israel of old, an empty vine, bringing forth fruit to myself! How long hast thou digged about me? How much care hast thou had respecting me, and yet O how unfruitful! Lord, be merciful unto me, or else I die, yea, for ever die.

"Saturday, May 8.—Have done little or nothing for God to-day. O my dear Lord, how much hast thou done for me, and yet how backward am I to do any thing for thee! O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, then would I weep incessantly for my barrenness. Was there ever such an unfruitful creature as I am? What a mercy it is that I am not now in endless flames. O for a heart pregnant with gratitude for thy loving kindness towards me a poor sinner. When, when shall I praise thee as I ought? Dearest Redeemer, stamp gratitude for ever upon my heart.

"Sunday, May 9.—Preached at Tabernacle, from Ephesians, iv. 15. "Grow up into him in all things." Experienced no great liberty. When shall I have done with darkness of mind? O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest. But stop, my soul, beware of impatience: the Lord will in his own good time take thee from every trial here to glory above.

"Afterwards preached at Kingswood; a large assembly, and all seemed to hear with great awe and reverence. The text was, "Unto this man will I look, even unto him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isaiah, lxvi. 2. Was able to speak with a little freedom; all glory be to God. O that good may be done, that some

sinner may be converted, and some saint comforted. Even so, says my soul, Amen.

"In the evening heard Mr. Wills at Tabernacle, from 1 Cor. iii. three last verses. The power of God appeared to be present; the congregation seemed to rejoice at the word, as those who had found great spoils, and I can say for myself, that it was a precious opportunity. O for more of the divine presence for such soul-enlivening seasons. Let me sit continually under thy shadow with great delight, while thy fruit is sweet to my taste. May I delight more in thy word, and run the way of thy commandments. Amen.

"Monday, May 10.—Preached at Tabernacle, from Isaiah, l. 10. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." A numerous audience, while all seemed attentive. Experienced the Lord's presence, and found myself in a comfortable frame. O dearest Jesus, how sweet is it to enjoy thy smiles; how delightful to be blessed with the light of thy countenance! What a mercy that ever thou shouldst give me the least glimpse of thy love; this is a joy which the world cannot give or take away: but, however, let me remember not to idolize my comforts, instead of looking out of them simply to Jesus. But yet, my soul, still covet to get precious seasons and soul-refreshing opportunities. O what can be compared to them? It is more to be desired than ten thousand worlds.

"Beneath his smiles my heart has liv'd,
And part of heaven possess'd;
I'll praise his name for grace receiv'd,
And trust him for the rest."

"Tuesday, May 11.—Heard Rev. Mr. Jenkins at Lady Huntingdon's Chapel: many of his remarks were judicious, and others exceptionable. Text was from John, xi. 14, 15. My soul, adore thy Redeemer for the inestimable privilege of hearing his gospel. Blessed, indeed, shall I be if I experimentally know that joyful sound. O let me, let me never be dead to its power; may I have a saving knowledge of it, to the joy, satisfaction, and comfort of my soul. Even so, Amen.

"Wednesday, May 12.—Found myself rather indisposed, but was enabled, through mercy, to preach at Pill in the evening from these words—"Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, yet I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Isaiah, lx. 15.—Have reason to believe the word was blessed to their souls. O Lord, this, this is my desire to be useful to others. Let me have that honour and happiness, if it be thy will, and thou shalt have all the glory.

"Thursday, May 13.—Came from Pill to Bristol this morning. The prospect was pleasing; the fields were variegated with numerous flowers, of different colours; the little songsters seemed all alive; melody was heard from all around, while the genial sun, the *life of all*, spread abroad his enliven-

ing rays. O what a field is the work of creation for the mind to rove in: who could behold such a piece of architecture, and not be in raptures with the grand Architect. O thou omnipotent Being, let me ever be devoted to thee. Suffer me not to delight in thy works, and yet be unmindful of thy great kindness to man. O what, what hast thou done for him! Why shouldst thou remember such a rebellious being? O amazing mercy, stupendous love indeed! Help me, men and angels, to adore him: O how can we speak enough of thy goodness, thou auspicious Friend? "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

"Friday, May 14.—Preached at Bath from Psalm lxi. 2. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Did not find much life in my own soul; but, however, God can make that which we often think unprofitable, really useful. Lord, I adore thee, that thou hast all in thy own hands, and that thou will do just as it seemeth good in thy sight.——Supped with a Christian lady, whose conversation was profitable and experimental. Ah, what a pity it is, that those who are children of God do not talk more about their heavenly Father, his kindness, love, mercy, power, grace, compassion, and goodness. Oh, what topics are these, they are worth spending time in conversing about. But O, wretched man that I am, how little do I speak of Jesus, how backward to make him the subject-matter of my conversation. O heavenly Spirit, teach my heart, and instruct my tongue to utter thy praises, sing of thy love, and talk of thy grace.

"Saturday, May 15.—Came from Bath to Bristol. Could not help thinking that time is the vehicle that conveys us through this world to eternity. Ah, how swift it flies, but how little improved; how little of it devoted to God, and how little spent in his service. O Lord, enable me to husband well my moments; they are precious, though fleeting. So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

"Sabbath, May 16.—Preached at Tabernacle, from Matt. xxiii. 9. "Call no man father, for one is your Father who is in heaven." Considered the Lord under the character of a father to his people; experienced much liberty, all glory be to his precious name. O that good may be done. How I long to be useful in bringing sinners to Christ: methinks if I had a thousand worlds, they should all be relinquished, for the honour of being made instrumental in the cause of my adorable Master. Afterwards preached at Pill Chapel, from 2 Cor. iv. 17. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." O how rich is this passage with divine consolation, how replete with blessings, how full of encouragement! Art thou afflicted, O my soul? Be patient, it is *but* for a moment: O what a golden "*but*" is that. O keep me, keep me, dearest Lord, from a murmuring and a discontented spirit: my distresses may be pungent; my trials may be sharp; but O let me remember there is an eternal weight of glory for me. O sweet words; not only glory, but a weight of glory, and not only so, but it

is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. O why, why are my thoughts employed so little about this soul-comforting subject? What, is there a heaven for me, and shall I not anticipate it? Blessed Jesus, let me dwell in a constant expectation of being taken to the full enjoyment of it. Amen.

"Monday, May 17.—Preached at Tabernacle, from 2 Tim. ii. 3. "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Was rather shut up, and really experienced what I was speaking of—the hardship of a Christian soldier. But, however, Jesus my Captain, can put life into the word, and make it profitable to those who are called to fight under his banner. O let it not return void, but be as bread cast upon the waters, to be found after many days.

"Tuesday, May 18.—Was much delighted in reading Mr. Ryland's sermon, preached at Broad Mead, August 28, 1780, being the day of the Annual Meeting of the Bristol Education Society; found many remarks worthy of notice. He has discovered himself to be a man of sound judgment, a capacious understanding, great ingenuity, and a good definer of terms.

"In the evening attended the Society, heard several give in their experiences that were old veterans in the cause of Christ, and some that were young. Lord, let it be a means of helping me forward.

"Wednesday, May 19.—Went to Hillsley, the village where I was born; being much grown, I was hardly known by any one, it being five years since I left the place; could not help admiring the great

goodness of my God to me since that time, in calling me from a state of darkness and ignorance to a knowledge of his truth! O Lord, why didst thou choose me and leave others? O how shall I love and adore thee enough! Make me, O make me ever grateful to thee. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

"Thursday, May 20.—Preached at Wotton-Under-edge, from Job, xxiii. 3. "O that I knew where I might find him:" and surely it was the language of my heart, for I had lost his presence, and a gloomy darkness was spread over my mind. From this let me learn, that God will suffer his ministers to feel what they are preaching, for I experienced the same uncomfortable frame of mind myself which I was describing to others. But, Lord, it is all for the best.

"Saturday, May 22.—Came from Hillsley to Bristol, but found myself ill and fatigued. Let this remind me what a poor weak creature I am; that my body is but a crazy tabernacle, continually giving warning that it must soon fall. But, happy thought, if I have but Jesus, let my body die, my soul shall rest, yea, sweetly rest in glory where he is. There I shall experience no pain of body or distress of mind, but shall be completely happy and blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

"Sunday, May 23.—Preached at Tabernacle this morning, from John, xvi. 7. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Found myself rather weak, and did not experience much liberty. In the afternoon preached at Ashton, from Acts,

xix. 2. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost;" though when I was going, I was in such a condition I did not know whether I should be hardly able to speak, yet the Lord opened my mouth, so that I preached with much strength, and I hope and trust to much profit.

"Monday, May 24.—Preached at the Tabernacle this morning, from Rom. xv. 30. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." The Lord seemed to bless the word. Took my leave of the people; they appeared to be much affected. O for the time when we shall meet to part no more.

"Tuesday, May 25.—Arrived safe in London this morning. Great God, how kind hast thou been! Hitherto hast thou helped me. But, ah! let me look back on this little excursion; what inactivity has there been; I have done nothing for my God as I ought to have done; I have not depended on him as I ought; I have not prayed to him as I should have done. How little have I exerted myself for thee, O my Saviour? and, ah, how much ingratitude is there remaining now in my heart. O, make me thankful; let the language of my heart be like that of thy servant of old, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me." To thee, O God, I now commit myself; be my Protector and Guide, and never leave me nor forsake me."

The following devotional papers, written about the same period with the journal, will afford much spiritual improvement to the pious reader, espe-

cially to the youthful Christian. Mr. Buck was literally a boy at the time of their composure, yet they discover considerable maturity in the divine life.

CONTEMPLATIONS.

Under Darkness of Soul.

Deprived of thy smiles, O adorable Redeemer, whither can I go? and how can I act? The best of earthly friends, or the greatest pleasures of this world, can yield me no satisfaction without thee. Ah, how have I learnt the truth of that sentence, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," and yet, alas! what proneness there is still to cleave to those things which cannot afford me the least help. O Lord, teach me by thy blessed Spirit to look only to thee, the fountain of happiness and delight, and while I thus roam about in darkness, be gracious to me. Speak to my soul, and with thy almighty power break the chain that now confines me in the gloomy pit of distress. One word from thee, dear Saviour, shall cause light to dart suddenly into my mind, and I shall rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory. I wait for thy return, I long for the light of thy countenance: thou only canst cheer my heart,

and dispel my fears. Whither art thou gone, then, O my beloved, and when shall I again hear thy lovely voice. Ah, Lord, how heavy are the moments, how tedious the hours! Every thing seems burdensome while thou art absent. Come then, Lord Jesus, come quickly; I am faint and tired without thee,—because I cannot behold thy face; but yet teach me to watch against impatience, and to remember that, " though heaviness endure for a night, joy shall come in the morning."

On the Heart.

What a *world* of iniquity is here, how full of abominations! How loathsome and corrupt! Can it be that ever I should be in love with myself? What, can I be fond of that which is so depraved; and can I trust in that which is so uncertain? Amazing stupidity, astonishing ignorance! Blessed Spirit, teach me to look out of myself entirely and continually. Is it not expressly declared, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? Alas! how are the evil weeds of pride, covetousness, malice, anger, discontent, sprung up in it; and, ah, how little am I weaned from, and how much do I depend upon it. I do not weep over it as I ought; I am too little watchful against its arts and deceptions. O blessed God, come and take full possession of it, that I may be more devoted to thee; suppress its rising vanities, and let all deadness and inactivity be taken away, that I may mount up as on eagles'

wings. But, ah, how am I retarded in running the heavenly race, by the heavy weight of its corruption. How it obstructs my going forward. Alas! it is full of wanderings, vain thoughts, and ever ready to start aside like a broken bow: I cannot lift it up to thee, O God, as I could wish. When I would desire to serve thee, it seems intent upon other things. But, Lord, is it not in thy hand? Make it therefore what thou pleasest, and let me be more heavenly minded; keep me from grovelling here after worthless objects and trifling toys, which can neither profit nor comfort, but, on the contrary, annoy and distress.

Desiring God.

Glorious Majesty! Eternal God, full of light and immortality! 'Tis thee, and thee alone, I desire. I covet not the pleasures, the delusive pleasures, of this vain world, I want nothing less than thy blessed self. But O can I, who am but dust, presume to think that God will condescend to dwell with me? What, will the infinite Jehovah, the omnipotent Being, the almighty Lord, look upon such a feeble worm? Stupendous love, transporting thought, that even the High and Lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, will take up his residence in the contrite heart! Come then, adorable Majesty; I pant, I desire, I long for thee; thou canst satisfy my soul, and make glad my spirit; when, alas! the trifles of time and sense can only mar my comfort, instead of increas-

ing it! Shall I then fly to any other resource but thee? Forbid it, gracious Heaven, and with thy preventing mercy suffer me not to wander from my God. Lord thou art witness, yea, my own conscience is witness, how oft I have strove to get from thee, but yet I do desire thee, I desire more to live to thee than ever I have yet done; for whom have I in heaven but thee, or on the earth that my soul longs after but thee? Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. A God in Christ,—O how delightful to such a vile sinner as I am. How sweet to be reconciled to him I have rebelled against, and to know that he is "*my God*," is better than ten thousand worlds. Give me an assurance of this, and I shall be happy, yea, unspeakably happy.

God's protecting Care.

Is there a maternal fondness and care in the heart of the parent towards the tender infant? O what is that, when compared to the love and care that the Lord has toward his beloved children? With what pity he looks upon, with what affection he beholds them. Hence, in the most pathetic language, he says, "Ephraim, my dear son, a pleasant child, since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, and I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." O sweet words, how animating to my disconsolate mind, yea, how refreshing to my distressed

and weary soul! Merciful Father, this is thy sweet voice; O what loving kindness runs through the whole. Can I despair with such an affectionate friend? Can I sink while his puissant arm is underneath me? No, it cannot be. Let me therefore indulge the pleasing thought, that, though I may be tossed about on the tempestuous ocean of this world, yea, though gloomy clouds and distressing storms threaten me, yet I am surrounded by thy almighty power, and kept by thy all-sufficient grace. But, ah, cursed unbelief, how oft dost thou rob me of this sweet sensation, and deprive me of my choicest comforts? Thou art a barrier to my joy. Adorable Jesus! keep, O keep this foul fiend from me; let me not be led away by its vain insinuations, nor hearken to its destructive voice: let me believe in, and depend on, thy gracious promises. Thou hast said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." O holy Spirit, apply that comfortable word to my dejected soul, and let it be as food for support, a shield for defence, a refuge in time of trouble, and consolation in the hour of distress.

Love to God.

Can I forbear being attached to that Friend who has done every thing in his power for my peace and happiness; and can it ever be that I should not love that glorious Being to whom I owe my existence, life, comfort, and my all? O gracious Saviour, I am constrained to love, yea, I cannot live without

loving thee. Ye glorious seraphs, ye blissful saints above, with all the favourites of heaven below, bear witness against me if I love him not. Why do I mourn after, yea, why am I anxious about thee, if I have no delight in nor love for thee? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou *knowest* that I desire thee above every object; thou art the solace of my soul, and the wish of my heart, and yet, alas! I cannot love thee enough. I would mourn over my weakness, I would weep on account of my inconstancy. O heavenly Father, let my heart burn with greater affection, and let not my love grow languid towards thee, my best Friend; give me to see more of thy excellency, and to be more enraptured with thy goodness; let the afflictions I meet with, the trials I am under, and the troubles I bear, all tend to make me dead and insensible to the world, and more alive to thee. I would love thee more, but my corruption chains me to the earth. O when will these fetters be broken, and my soul be set at happy liberty? When shall I fly away to eternal bliss; ah, when shall I reach yon delectable hills, and tread those heavenly plains? There will I adore thee without ceasing, and love without fainting. But, ah me, I have still to stay behind, to tread the rugged road, and meet the dreadful storm: But, O precious Immanuel, bless me with patience to wait thy sovereign will, and to be resigned to thy wise providence.

God's Providence.

Lord, I adore thy vast designs, and wonder at thy all-wise providence: thou art not accountable to creatures, and none can say unto thee, "What doest thou?" "Thy way is in the sea, thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." Shall I then murmur, when I consider that thou art too wise to err, *and too good to do wrong?* Heaven forbid. Though I cannot tell what thou art doing, and am ignorant of thy divine projects, yet let me ever be submissive to thy gracious will. Though I cannot comprehend thy works, nor understand thy ways, yet let me be resigned, yea, perfectly resigned at all times, and in all places, to thy wise disposal. But, ah, wretched man that I am, how frequently do I mistake thee, when thou art full of love and pity, and art only afflicting me, that I might be more refined from my earthly dross; then, to my shame, do I think, that in wrath thou art going to leave me, or, at least, I am not one of thy beloved children. O blessed Jesus, give me the eye of faith, to see that thou wilt do all things well, and may I, when bereaved of friends, or deprived of comforts, be enabled with patience and gratitude to take up the words of thy servant of old, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, *but still* blessed be the name of the Lord." If thy providences are adverse may I not despair, and if they are prosperous or pleasant may I not be careless or ungrateful. Into thy hands, O glorious Immanuel, I surrender myself; O let me never be satisfied with any thing

short of thee, and may I, under every dispensation, say, " The will of the Lord be done."

God's Presence.

O precious Saviour, how delightful to experience the light of thy countenance; how ravishing is thy sweet presence! 'Tis here I would desire to dwell for ever. Had I the tongues of ten thousand angels, or even of all the celestial choir, I could not express what it is! I can only taste and admire, but I cannot explain! How oft has it cheered my desponding soul, when I have been ready to sink; yea, how has it supported me in the most pungent distress! O heavenly Sun, let me feel more of thy genial rays, and fructifying influences. It is heaven, indeed, to dwell under thy auspicious smiles. Let the world boast of their joy, and talk of their pleasure; I will triumph in thee O God, while I am in extacy with a sight of thy smiling face, and am transported with the wonders of thy love! Their delight is vain, delusive, and transitory, but my happiness is a stream which flows from an inexhaustible fountain. Begone, then, for ever gone, ye vain charmers, that would *allure me from my God.* In him I have all, in you I have nothing.— Come, then, kind Redeemer, and make thine abode in my heart! Divine Paraclete, let me ever sit under thy shadow, while thy fruit is sweet to my taste! Thou canst make my trials soft, my troubles light, and my afflictions profitable, by thy blessing. My God and Saviour, keep

me near to thy side, and humble at thy feet. Fulfil that sweet promise, "I will water *thee* every moment, lest any hurt *thee*, I will keep thee night and day." Blessed Jesus! I adore thee for that refreshing word; it is big with consolation, and replete with blessings to all thy children. May I be one: I ask it. Even so, Amen.

Praising God.

When I take a retrospect of thy great goodness manifested towards such a rebellious child as I am: it causes me to wonder at myself, that I am not more thankful. O gratitude, thou sweet companion, come and take possession of my heart; for how can I live without praising thee, dear Saviour, for the innumerable and unmerited blessings I receive from thy gracious hands? Thou bountiful Benefactor, that openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing, I bless thy sacred name, that ever I should taste the streams of redeeming grace and dying love. Ye heavenly cherubim and glorified saints, that now surround the throne above, help me to praise him whom my soul loveth, and whose kindness, yea, inconceivable kindness, demands my highest lays, "my life, my all." O, for the happy period, when this mortal tabernacle shall drop to the dust, then shall my soul rise with joy, and with rapidity pass through unmeasurable space, till it arrives at the gate of celestial bliss. Then, ah, then, most sweetly shall I break forth in rapturous strains

of gratitude, and never, no never, cease praising the adorable Redeemer. But now, even now, do I desire to offer up my imperfect acknowledgments of thy undeserved favours. What shall I render unto thee for all thy benefits bestowed on worthless me. There is no part of my life that I can look back to, that does not stand as full proof of thy mercies, O God. Let me, therefore, with heart and life, give incessant testimonies of gratitude, and may I ever join with the holy Psalmist in saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." This is my desire; I fain would sing it for ever and ever. Amen.

Spiritual Declension.

Alas, my soul, how strange is it, that one day thou shouldst be mounting up as on the wings of an eagle, and the next grovelling in the dust; one moment burning with celestial ardour, and the next cold and indifferent. O what perpetual changes am I subject to, while in this vale of tears. How ready is my depraved heart to deceive me, as well as to decline from every spiritual duty. Lord, can it be that thou wilt take notice of such a rebellious creature? What, wilt thou remember one who so often forgets thee? What, wilt thou manifest thy benignity to a poor worm that is so vile? Amazing mercy! that after all my stupidity, changeableness, indifference, hardness of heart, and vanity, thou shouldst look upon me again: pardon my rebellion, and re-

ceive me to thyself. Wert thou not a God of unbounded love and inexpressible kindness, my backslidings must have deprived me of thy favour for ever. But, ah, blessed be thy name, that thou art still the same in all thy attributes. Hence I hear thy sacred word, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Thou art a Friend that loveth at all times, and a Brother born for adversity. Come then, thou glorious Jesus, be propitious to my waiting soul. Let me feel thy quickening power; rouse me from my spiritual slumber, and suffer me not to grow careless, O my God. It is my greatest desire to live to thy glory, and be devoted, yea, ever devoted to thy service. Inspire me with more zeal, and let my soul be conformed to thee in all things. Shine upon me with thy healing beams, and may my heart ever burn with love, joy, and gratitude.

Resignation to the Divine Will.

So wise art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways, and gracious in every dispensation, that I should prove myself a monster of ingratitude, were I to complain of thy dealings, or murmur at thy providences; and yet, (O astonishing depravity!) my heart has often risen with impatience, when I have felt thy afflicting hand, that I have been ready to say, "It is better for me to die than to live." But not so when taught by the blessed Spirit; no, dear Saviour, I could then submit to thy divine will, and be enabled

to cast all my cares upon thee with ease and delight. But I can almost as soon stop the sun, as to *make myself* resigned, and willing to suffer: none but a superior power could enable me to do that. Well then, dear Lord, I commit myself to thee, and should I be all my days kept in the valley of adversity, yet let me not drop a murmuring word. If I possess thee, precious Jesus, though I lose all beside, yet I have every thing that can make me happy, for thou canst enable me to rejoice and be thankful, even when every earthly comfort is taken from me. I can still say with the Apostle, "I have all, and abound." I desire, therefore, O God, in all my troubles, to remember, that thou art making all things work together for good, and to say continually, with unspeakable joy and sincere gratitude, "My Jesus hath done all things well." In this spirit may I live, in this spirit may I die; and when I enter the celestial world above, it will be my uninterrupted song through all eternity.

Happiness only in God.

Infinitely blessed art thou, O God, in thyself, and capable of making thy creatures unspeakably happy. I would upbraid my roving heart, and weep over my vain spirit, for not repairing to thee, the eternal fountain of bliss. Experience, it is true, has as it were laboured to teach me, that all is a blank beside thee, and every day brings fresh demonstrations, that real felicity is only to be found in thy blessed

self. Beware, then, O my soul, of seeking after the flower of uninterrupted joy where it cannot bloom. Look, look above all sublunary things; for though they so frequently appear so fair, yet, alas! they are full of pricking thorns, and only tend to vex the mind, and leave it burdened with anxious cares. Teach me, then, O Lord, to sit loose to every vanity of this world: may I not set my affections on things below, but on things above.

> "O dearest Lord, take thou my heart;
> Where can such sweetness be,
> As I have tasted in thy love,
> As I have found in thee."

Holy Spirit, let me be taken up with the glorious Jesus! Show me more of his love, and learn me to live, constantly to live, to his glory: let me be filled with thy fulness, so as to be dead to trifles of sense, and alive to thee alone. O that I could but walk more as becometh thy gospel, and adorn the doctrines of God my Saviour in all things. Ah, why is it, my soul, that thou art so insensible to the kindness of thy heavenly Father, and art so little active for him? "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" I long for the glorious time: O when shall it once be?

Time and Eternity.

Ah, why are my golden moments so foolishly neglected? why do I lavish out my hours, as if they were of no value? Precious time, how I abuse thee! how do I let thee slip without improvement? But, O, my soul, think, yea, seriously think, that when it is once lost, it is gone for ever; no recalling of the past minutes, no stopping the present; and shall I then be careless about them? Forbid it, gracious God! lest they should stand as a witness of my negligence in the last day. "So teach me, therefore, to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom." Alas! the wheel of time is moving swiftly round; but soon shall it stop with thee, O my soul, when thou wilt plunge into an eternal world. Eternity, eternity! O what is it? I am lost in the idea. Amazing length! Where are thy bounds? who can measure thee? I stand astonished at the thought, while I rest short of comprehending what it is; and yet how near, yea, very near, am I reaching it; a few more throbbing pulses, and the place that now knoweth me, shall know me no more. Well was it observed, "Life is a moment, but upon this moment eternity depends." What, then, shall I squander away my days in vanity? shall I be insensible, while I stand upon the brink of this awful eternity? O thou Omnipotent Being, teach me how to redeem the time, so that every hour may be filled up with its proper duty; for death is fast approaching, the night is coming on, when no man can work. Quicken me, then, O God,

that I may be in earnest with my immortal soul; yea, that I may gain an assurance of being in yonder blissful regions of eternal light.

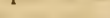
A Remembrance of past Kindness.

I will now raise my Ebenezer, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me;" thus far am I come on my journey. Many a dark night, rugged road, and uncomfortable scene have I gone through; but my God has been my stay, and brought me safe to the present moment. Under the shadow of his wings have I been kept, while I have been guarded with, and supported by his almighty arm. With what care has he watched over me; with what tenderness he has beheld me; with what love and wisdom he has guided me! How oft when I have been scheming for myself, and laying out my projects, has he frustrated my designs, profitably disappointed me, and saved me from submerging into unknown trouble and sorrow: and at other times, when I have been ready to sink, as it were, under my difficulties, and to say, "I am undone, I shall no more see deliverance," has he kindly sent relief, and unexpectedly turned my pain into pleasure! These are thy wise dealings, O gracious God, which I trust never, no, never, will be erased from my remembrance. Thou hast led me forth in the right way, and shall I not hope that thou wilt be with me even to the end of my journey? Ah, why should I doubt it, or distrust thee for a moment? O precious

faith, dwell thou with me while travelling through this wilderness. May I, in every circumstance, however difficult or distressing, be led to thee, thou sovereign Protector, thou adorable Jehovah!

"Through the desart wild conduct me
With a glorious pillar bright;
In the day a cooling comfort,
And a cheering fire by night.

"Be my guide in ev'ry peril,
Watch me hourly, night and day,
Else my foolish heart will wander
From thy Spirit far away."



Longing for Heaven.

Ye celestial angels, when will ye receive your commission to guard my disembodied spirit to the mansions of eternal glory? How much longer yet must I dwell in this vain world, subject to sorrow, and exposed to trials and afflictions? When shall I hear the joyful whisper, "Come away, and inherit the peaceful mansions above?" O welcome day, when I shall be called from exile, home. Heaven! What is it? It is unknown to mortal man. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart, what thou hast prepared, O God, for those that love thee. But yet I will be bold to say,

"That all the heaven I there possess,
Will be the light of Jesu's face."

It would be no heaven without thee; thou art the resplendent Sun, who wilt cause every heart to overflow with joy. There shall I see my once fellow-pilgrims, the spirits of just men made perfect, with all the innumerable company of seraphim; but ah, pleasant thought, there shall I behold the Lord himself! Ye happy bowers, when shall I once reach you; ye aromatic fields, ye groves of everlasting verdure, when shall I enjoy you? Ye pleasant streams of uninterrupted happiness, I long to drink of you. Ah, then shall I sorrow no more: thou, O God, wilt wipe away all tears from my now weeping eyes; no sin shall distress my mind, no cloud shall intervene; but I shall for ever delight in, and enjoy my God and Saviour. How shall I traverse those heavenly plains, and join the blissful choir in adoring the lamb through all eternity. Then shall I sing with love and gratitude, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Sense of the Love of God.

Why, O glorious Redeemer, should I be the object of thy love? I stand astonished, that ever thou shouldst look upon me, the chief of sinners! Surely thy kindness is past description, thy goodness is unsearchable! For had not thine been the love of a God, it could not have extended to such a rebellious creature. But, O God, I desire to have it more imprinted on my heart, that it may constrain me to

love thee above every object; give me to see that it is everlasting, distinguishing, and free. What a sweet thought, "That those thou once lovest, thou wilt love to the end." Gracious God! I bless thee that ever I tasted the streams of this boundless river, that maketh glad the city of God! But, Lord, I would wish to drink more still. Open mine eyes to see, enlarge my heart to receive, and let me be filled; yea, let me have full measure, pressed down, and running over. O that I could but maintain a continual sense of this precious love. How strange is it, that sometimes I should be so delighted with it, as not to be expressed, and then again I am as indifferent about it as if I were a stranger to it. But what an unspeakable mercy, that thou dost not change, O God. Glory be to thy name, that thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I thank thee, that thou wilt not revoke thy word, nor alter thy affection. O let me, dear Saviour, enjoy more of thy love. Dispel my darkness, take away my coldness of heart, and let me be continually exulting in this glorious attribute, while I join with the Psalmist in saying, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

My Soul followeth hard after thee.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! In this solitary wilderness I wander, hoping that I shall find thee whom my soul loveth. How long shall I wait

for thy return? The glorious canopy above, the flowery meads, the murmuring streams, the verdant fields, yea, all the beauties of creation, cannot sufficiently content my immortal soul, without thee, O God. "O that I knew where I could find thee." Draw near to my fainting mind: speak peace to my disconsolate heart. Look upon a poor pilgrim; remember him with that favour thou bearest unto thy people, and visit him with thy salvation. O gracious Saviour, put thou my tears into thy bottle, note my feeble petitions in thy sacred book. But ah, Lord, how gloomy is it to walk this rugged road without one glimmering ray; how uncomfortable to tread this thorny path, deprived of thy sweet presence. Return, return, Almighty Protector; my soul moves on heavily; I faint, I sink, without thee!

"Jesus, my Lord, my life, my light,
O come with blissful ray;
Break radiant through the shades of night,
And chase these shades away."

Then, ah, then, with what delight shall I travel on, while I contemplate the wonders of thy sovereign grace, and remember that every rolling hour brings me nearer to my happy abode! Cheer up, my soul; a few more battles, and the victory shall be won; a few more steps, and thy race shall be ended. Lord, in patience let me possess my soul. But O, while I am here below, keep me as the apple of thine eye, and amidst innumerable foes, and successive trials, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.

Rising above the World.

O happy ascension, it is spiritual and delightful: mount still higher, my soul; the farther from the world, the nearer to God! Descend, celestial Dove, and teach me to fly swifter from its alluring vanities. What is there that can profit or comfort me? Ye sons of pleasure, ye deluded worldlings, what have you to satisfy a soul that is bound for eternity? Alas, ye are all physicians of no value, blanks that contain nothing. I turn from you, while I behold the vanity of your projects; though startled to see you playing upon the brink of unutterable woe, and thoughtless of death and eternity.

> ..... Fools that *you* are,
> Never to think of death and of *yourselves*
> At the same time! As if to learn to die
> Were no concern of *yours*.
>
> BLAIR.

Lord, I thank thee, that thou hast freely and undeservedly called me from the giddy throng; I bless thy name a thousand times, adorable Majesty, for such inexpressible kindness. Why was I not left with them to go down the river of sin, into the ocean of endless misery? Distinguishing goodness! wonderful love! May I always bow at thy feet, O God, with true thankfulness of heart; while I prove by my conduct that I love thee with the greatest sincerity. Let me not be carried away by the torrent of the world, but stand steady in the midst of their opposition. Let the winds be high, or the waves

roll, thou canst hide me under the shadow of thy almighty and protecting wings: then, ah, then shall I be safe. Vain world, retain your frowns; ye surrounding mockers, still despise; my God will make me infinitely happy with the smiles of his countenance; I shall experience that joy which you cannot bestow, yea, that delight of which you never can deprive me.

Hatred to Sin.

Dear Saviour, let me never be at peace with this accursed monster! What, shall I indulge that which is an enemy to him I profess to love? Shall I delight in the very thing that would prove my eternal ruin? God forbid! What misery must attend my steps, what guilt must load my conscience, if I give way to this abominable evil? But alas! how prone am I to do it, were it not for preventing grace? How soon should I go astray, how readily backslide, if thou didst not uphold me, O God? But glory be to thy name, thou hast constrained me to confess, with lip and life, that I hate sin, with a perfect hatred. Thou knowest, blessed Lord, how it frequently grieves my heart, and causes me to go mourning from day to day. It is this that is the cause of all my sorrow, and that often mars my peace. O then, let my aversion to it grow stronger and stronger; give me a watchful eye, a steady heart, and a courageous mind, that I may war against it; may I not fight and fall, but fight and conquer. Make thy

strength perfect in my weakness: whatever troubles I am under, whatever afflictions I endure, whatever difficulties I meet with, I only ask, that thou wilt keep me from this dreadful enemy, knowing "it is more eligible to suffer than to sin." But, alas! I have reason to weep and lament, that I cannot mourn more on account of it, that I do not pray with more earnestness against it. O Lord, quicken me with thy spirit, "Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me."

Contentment a great Blessing.

How much better is it to be contented with what I have received, than to murmur for what I have not. But, alas, I know not when *it is well with me* —I frequently complain when there is no occasion. Curb my impatient disposition, and let me be satisfied with what thou hast bestowed upon me, O God. Real contentment is only to be learnt in the school of Christ. Lord, I would humbly lay myself before thee, to be taught by thy Spirit. I cannot teach myself; I am altogether weakness; but I bless thy name, that thou art able to dispense this grace unto me. Come then, O thou best of Friends, pluck up the weed of discontent, and make me continually happy in every situation wherein thou shalt place me. Put an end to all my complainings, and stop my murmurings of heart; and whether in the heights of prosperity, or depths of adversity, may I be constrained to say, "Thou hast done all things well."

O let there never be a part of my life, wherein I should deviate from this just sentiment. But yet, astonishing depravity! I am almost ready at times to act as if there were no Providence to control or direct. Take away such base ideas, O God, and *let me live while I live;* yea, let all the actions of my life bear a testimony of my dependence on thee, *contentedness in thee*, and devotedness to thee.

Trusting in God.

How pleasant is it to live by faith; how sweet to be enabled to cast every care upon a wise and gracious Saviour, who is ever willing to succour the afflicted, and strengthen the weak. Lord, I come as a poor unworthy worm into thy presence, to beg for more faith to rely on thy sacred promises. Inspire me with a holy confidence in thy word, so that in all my trials I may look to thee, and under every distress depend upon thy unbounded goodness; thou art an unlimited God, and in thee dwells an everlasting fulness of grace, for the comfort of thy unworthy children; why then should I be for limiting thee; yea, why are my thoughts so narrow, my conceptions so small, of thy glorious self? Lord, enlarge my scanty ideas, give me greater views of thy compassion, love, and kindness to thy people. O, thou faithful Jesus, in mercy remember my unfaithful heart: wean me from trusting in myself, and teach me to trust in thee, and thee alone. May every care, circumstance, and trouble, be referred to thy

hands. Bless me with that sweet grace of faith, let it attend all my steps, accompany me wherever I go, be with me in whatever I undertake; let it be my companion in every situation through life. I ask it of thee; O deny me not if it be thy gracious will. Then shall even the thorny path be made easy, and mountains become plains, while with this glass I look beyond the transitory scenes below, to the wide fields of everlasting glory, and comfort myself with the thought, that every step brings me nearer to this long wished-for rest.

Longing for more of the Spirit.

Alas! how empty is my *poor vessel* of that blessed Spirit, which is the life of my soul, and my greatest joy. Holy Ghost, how little do I possess of, and how little am I actuated by thee! How much am I led by my vain imaginations, and governed by the principle of self. O that thou wouldst come, and guide me into all truth. Direct and comfort me in every tribulation, and keep my heart alive by thy fructifying influences. I pant, I long for thee, O thou blessed Inspirer and Comforter of Souls!

"Holy Ghost, dispel my sadness,
Pierce the clouds of sinful night;
Come thou source of sweetest gladness,
Breathe thy life, and spread thy light."

Show me, O show me the things of Jesus; teach me more of his everlasting love, and learn me to be

more obsequious to his heavenly mandates. O how would I grieve, that I do not enjoy thee more: cleanse my soul from evil thoughts and trifling vanities, and take up thy residence within me. Glorious Spirit! bear witness with my spirit, that I am born of thee; give me to see that I am sealed with thy blessed seal unto the day of redemption; yea, that seal which all the men on earth, nor millions of infernal spirits, can never break. I thank thee that it remains for ever. What abundant room have I, therefore, to rejoice. Begone, thou melancholy sadness, and let me exult in the precious promises of my Lord and Saviour! Surely I have reason to say, "Thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace;" yea, and so they will be, if I have but thy divine Spirit thus to enliven me.

The Works of God.

O that my tongue were but as the pen of a ready writer, then would I speak with liberty upon thy wonderful works, O Lord; how manifold are they, even in creation; how wisely ordered, how beautifully formed, and how astonishingly conducted. "Thou, O God, hast measured out the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance."—"Behold all nations before thee are as nothing, and less than nothing, and

vanity." Shall such puny mortals as men dare, therefore, to arraign thee at their bar, or even admit a thought that thou canst do wrong, or call in question thy power and might, or even assert that what thou hast done is useless, or that thy works answer no purpose.

> "Let no presuming impious railer tax
> Creative wisdom, as if aught was form'd
> In vain, or not for admirable ends."
>
> THOMPSON.

O that while the ignorant multitude are saying, "Who is the Lord?" may it be my delight to contemplate his glorious works, and continually to behold him in surrounding objects. May this God, the maker of all things, the framer of worlds, yea, who hangeth them upon nothing, and whose almighty command every thing obeyed, be my God; then will I not fear when all these things shall dissolve, when the elements melt with fervent heat, the protuberant rocks are torn in pieces, the lofty mountains are rent in twain, and the whole creation in flames, even then shall I lift up my head with joy.

Imploring Help and Assistance.

Every moment is a time of need for me to apply to thee, O gracious Father. I stand in continual necessity of thy kind assistance; I cannot take another step without thy friendly aid; be merciful, therefore, unto me, O God! Thou art well acquainted with my

weakness; strengthen me, that I may go forward: thou seest my infirmities, I beseech thee, therefore, let thine everlasting arms be under me. Thou art not a stranger to my afflictions, let then thy grace support me. O remember a helpless creature, now in this howling wilderness wandering about in a solitary way. Unable to direct or help myself, I would again renew my supplications; O spurn me not from thy presence, nor shut up thy tender mercy from me: regard my feeble petitions, and be gracious unto my waiting soul. Ah, Lord, I know thou art ready to help the weak, and to look upon the sinner who is sensible of his sin and misery! What encouragement is it to my dejected mind, "That a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Precious word, it brings a ray of light, it affords me a little comfort, even when I sit musing on my distress. Compassionate Saviour, loving Friend! I thank, I adore thee for ever, that thou art willing to bless, and able to save such a vile sinner; and as thou didst not forget one who once with fervency cried, "Lord, help me," so I trust thou wilt not be deaf to my unworthy supplications, discard my groans, or reject even those desires which I have after thee, O God; for thou hast kindly said, "Whosoever will come unto thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out."

Thou hast guided me by thy counsel.

This day I enter into the nineteenth year of my age. O what little progress have I made; still a babe in religion; knowing but little of my own heart, of the subtilty of Satan, and of *a vain world!* And what a small part out of this time have I *even made* a profession. It is not five years since the Lord was pleased to give me real and serious impressions, which I trust (though with a holy fear and humbleness of mind would I speak it) will issue in my final salvation. O that I may be enabled to give great proofs of my calling, and that the world, professors, and believers may see that I am determined to know nothing else but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Lord, do thou give me evidences that I am born again; give me a disposition to leave all for thy sake. Cut every cord, break every chain that would hold me back; dissolve every tie to this world and its vanities, and grant, that as my past years have been spent to little or no purpose, that my future (should my life be spared) may be continually, sincerely, and wholly devoted to thee. But, Lord, I desire to praise thee for the innumerable, unmerited favours thou hast bountifully bestowed upon me. Thou hast led me forth, and guided me by thy wise counsel through many dark labyrinths; I have been upheld alone by thy power, and kept by thy grace. O that now thou wouldst refresh me with the heavenly showers of thy Spirit. "Bear me as on the wings of an eagle, and bring me to thyself." Here I am clogged too much

with earthly toys; O let loose my soul, that it may fly away to eternal rest and glory.

"Come, heavenly wind, and blow
A prosperous gale of grace,
To waft from all below,
To heaven, my destin'd place:
Then, in full sail, my port I'll find,
And leave the world and sin behind."

Aspiring after Humility.

Notwithstanding all the trials and afflictions I have experienced, yet what an unhumbled creature am I! Lord, what a mercy it is that thou dost bear with such a proud wretch! No sooner is the rod withdrawn, but I am apt to think of myself more highly than I ought to think. But, O God, thou knowest that I desire not merely to talk of, but to possess that valuable garment of humility. With self-abasement, therefore, would I wish to come before thee, while I use the language of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I have nothing to bring, I have nothing to boast of, why then should I so often vainly think much of what I possess: if I have grace, to whom am I indebted but to thee, O God: if I possess gifts, from whence came they, but from thee? If I have temporal blessings of any kind, are they not the bounties of thy liberal hand? Do I enjoy peculiar mercies, whom have I to praise but thee, O Lord? O give me proper views of these things, that my proud imagination may be removed,

and my boasting tongue be silent! Whatever others think, that they are sufficiently humble, I must confess that I have arrived but to a small degree of this grace. Alas! pride seems to be a constant attendant, and follows me wherever I go, and, as it were, taints every thing I do. Gracious God, whatever thou dost withhold from me, I beseech thee withhold not a spirit of humility. May it be my particular characteristic in every action of my life; it is a grace which makes the Christian shine, and the more we imbibe *that spirit*, the more we resemble our dear Redeemer, who abased himself on earth that his people might be exalted to everlasting glory!

Dread of carnal Security.

O my God, let me never be at ease in Zion; keep me from being satisfied only with professing the name of Christ; but may I depart from all iniquity. What can be more detestable in thy sight than the formal hypocrite? Thou, O Jesus, in the days of thy flesh, didst loudly inveigh against such; suffer me not, therefore, to be of that character, and under that denomination. Give me oil in my lamp, and let that gospel which I hear be the power of God unto my salvation. Lord, thousands talk about grace, but, awful to reflect, how few experience the effect of it. If heaven could be purchased by words, many would enter in and obtain it; but, O my soul, ever remember that "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." What reason have I to believe I belong to

God, if his word do not influence my conduct? Alas, I may vainly deceive myself, and say, Peace, peace, when there is none! Help me then, O Lord, seriously and continually to examine myself; for to be under a delusion in this respect, is one of the most dreadful evils this side hell. It is an awful truth, that "many are called, but few chosen." Numbers hear that do not fear; multitudes attend that never possessed a spark of grace; yea, and some come with a kind of satisfaction, and are even affected with what they hear, but, dreadful to think, it soon wears off again, and then they get (in one sense) more hardened than ever! O that I never may be found with these, O God. Surely their condemnation must be great; for thou wilt say unto them, "Take them, bind them hand and foot, and cast them into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Desiring to be kept from Slothfulness.

How vigilant are the men of this world in pursuit of those things which must soon decay; how assiduous are they in laying up treasures on earth, where moth and rust can corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but, alas! how backward am I in working, as it were, for eternity! Shame be to my soul, that I lose so many precious hours, and do so little for my Heavenly Master! How am I kept back by slothfulness, and how fond of self indulgence! O God, I work for thee, as if thou wert cruel or hard

to me! I run as if there were no prize to obtain: I frequently act as if I had never experienced the least of thy goodness. O Holy Spirit, descend and diffuse life into my inactive soul, and make me stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as I know my labour is not in vain in the Lord: and let me consider for a moment, how is it that I am so spiritually indolent in the cause of God, when I have received so many favours from him. How is it that I can be careless, when I do not know that I shall have another moment given me? How is it that I can be slothful when I am conscious that death will soon arrive to demand my soul, and my tabernacle drop to the dust? How is it that I am not more diligent, when I remember that the Lord eyes me continually? How is it that I think so little about my immortal soul, and am so indifferent, when I reflect that I must stand at the bar of God to give an account. Think seriously, think, O my soul, on these things, lest the Lord, when he cometh, should find me as the barren fig-tree, and pronounce an everlasting curse upon me.

Looking for the general Judgment.

What an awful day must this be, when the sons of Adam will burst from their graves at the sound of the awful trumpet: some rising to everlasting life, others to everlasting shame and contempt. See with what horror the wicked go to receive their direful

sentence; conscience condemning; their sins set in array before them; ministers, believers, former friends, relations, sermons, privileges, and opportunities, perhaps bearing witness against them; while Satan stands ready to plunge them into the gulph of inexpressible torment! Alas! how ghastly their countenance, how miserable their minds! O God, let me not be of the unhappy number; but on the contrary, may I be found at thy right hand, to receive the blessed sentence, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But, O my soul, think, even now think, what a tremendous day that will be, "When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." With what majesty will the judge appear! Awful sight! Well might the poet sing,

"Lo, he comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favour'd sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of his train."

O precious Saviour, let me be one of that glorious throng. O forbid, forbid that on that day I should be drawn forth with the workers of iniquity, to hear the awful word pronounced, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels." I beseech thee, let me be interested in thy blood, and adorned with thy righteousness, so that when the solemn period arrives, I

may be enabled to look to the Judge with joy. Even so, O Lord. Amen.

Deliverance from Hell.

Why am I not confessing thy justice in the gloomy cavern of hell, and made a monument of thy everlasting wrath? Why am I not with infernal spirits, experiencing the power of thine anger? Why not in blackness of darkness, raging in dreadful despair? Why! Because of the free and distinguishing love of a Saviour! No other reason can be assigned. It is not on account of any thing inherently in me. Alas! I deserve eternal banishment from thee, O God; and if thou wert to enter into judgment with me, I must sink before thee as self-condemned for ever. But, O, the riches of thy mercy, the greatness of thy love, that thou shouldst remember me with pity, and behold me with kindness; yea, that I should be plucked as a brand from this burning! Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name be all the glory. But, O, the misery of those who will be sentenced to dwell in everlasting flames, "where they will weep with dry tears, yet none of their pain will be allayed by weeping." Shocking situation! How will they wish they never had been born, and gnash their teeth in reflecting on their past folly. For ever, for ever, for ever, will they be locked up in that infernal prison. O how welcome would death be to them could they but die; but, alas! Death has done his work, and is as it were ex-

pired himself. As the Poet says, when speaking of the judgment day,

> " Death, wrapt in chains, low at the basis lies,
> " And on the point of his own arrow dies."
>
> YOUNG.

I would meditate on these things to rouse myself, while I continually would pray, " Lord Jesus, deliver me from the wrath to come," and let me not perish with the wicked in eternal woe and misery. Amen.

Spending an Eternity with God.

Adorable Saviour! I long to be set at liberty, and to be freed from all the pains and sorrows of a mortal state. Ah, blessed Eternity, when shall I enjoy thee, and when shall I see my Redeemer face to face? When wilt thou admit me into thy glorious presence? My soul longs for the happy moment; it looks forward with joy to the blissful time, when thou wilt say, " Come up hither." But O, amazing thought, an eternity, shall I spend in those heavenly courts! After thousands, ten thousands of years are gone, still it will be no diminishing of eternity! O, my soul, give it a consideration; let it be a means of rejoicing, while thou art here in time, that thou wilt be with God hereafter in this eternity. But, alas! I hear, I read, I talk about it, as if I were not concerned therein. O God, impress it on my mind, and in every trouble, situation, trial, circumstance, and affliction, let me not lose sight of this. Day and

night, in prosperity or adversity, let me always have it set before me; let not the vanities of this world, or any of the trifles of sense, wean my mind from the contemplation of it. And now, O God, I would fervently beg of thee to keep me while here below; let me not turn to the right hand or to the left, but walk uprightly in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Give me thy blessing, favour me with thy presence, support me by thy grace, and enable me continually to look forward to that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Then will I sing,

"In hope of that immortal crown,
I now the cross sustain,
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain."

On Mr. Buck's return to London, he resumed his labours at Silver Street Chapel, in connection with his respected friend Mr. Wills. Preaching was his delight; every day he acquired more accuracy and boldness: though not nineteen years of age, he was heard with attention and pleasure by numerous congregations. This excited the envy and malice of many with whom his profession as a lawyer necessarily associated him; for he had not yet relinquished his secular employment.

"I soon became marked, (says he) derided, and ridiculed. This I regarded not, but considered it as an honour to suffer persecution for righteousness-

sake. A few came occasionally to hear me; and sometimes, when there was any religious dispute among the clerks of my office, an appeal was made to me for my opinion; while others, knowing my sentiments, used to blaspheme the more, by way of provocation. I would only just observe here, how necessary it is for Christians to act with prudence, vigilance, and caution, when placed in situations where every eye is upon them, eager to detect in their deportment something which may be turned to their disadvantage. Yet in such circumstances let them not indulge gloom, but rather a cheerfulness of spirit, that the enemies of religion may perceive that they have not exchanged the pleasures of the world for a melancholy fanaticism. I was enabled, I hope, to pursue this plan, and did not consider myself offended with the bitter sarcasms and the irreligious jeers thrown upon me by those who were ignorant of the power of religion.

" There was a gentleman in this profession, much older than myself, very clever, sensible, and judicious, not at all of licentious morals, but who made no particular profession of religion: he was much respected, and had many friends: he was taken ill, and, to my surprise, sent for me. He knew, indeed, that I was religiously inclined; but I should have supposed that he would have rather sent for the minister of the parish than for me. I however went. I found him very ill; but he was exceedingly glad to see me. On conversing with him as to the state of his mind, he did not appear to me to have exactly right views of divine things, but talked too much

about the "virtue of his prayers." I observed to him, that we had all violated God's sacred law, and come short of his glory; that by nature we were all depraved; and that nothing but the blood of Christ could pardon our sins, and his righteousness justify our souls. After some time spent upon these topics, he said, "These were things he was a stranger to." I repeated that passage in John, vi. 37. and that in 1 John, i. 7. from which he seemed to derive great consolation. After assuring him that Jesus was willing to receive all poor sinners, who saw themselves lost by nature, and felt their need of him; he broke out into a kind of rapture, and exclaimed, "O heavenly youth, thou hast brought me consolation indeed." He endeavoured to repeat every now and then, when I spoke any thing encouraging, and would say, "Heavenly thought! heavenly thought!" When I mentioned any of the promises, he said, "They have found their way to my heart." I was, however, still desirous of having a little more evidence of his really feeling the evil of sin; but, on further conversation, I was somewhat relieved by observing the compunction of his conscience. He observed, "that though the world thought well of him, yet he could see into his heart. There (says he) is the black catalogue of my sins.—I have my doubts." I was anxious to know from what these doubts arose, and therefore asked him, whether it was on account of his sins; when he answered, "Yes, it is that, it is that." In engaging in prayer with him, he seemed to eat every word, and at the end of almost every sentence he could not refrain

from expressing his approbation, and joining in the same exercise. I left him in a state of triumph, and in a few days afterwards he expired. I am no great advocate for what are called death-bed conversions, but I fear sometimes we may go to the contrary extreme. Grace can and doth save at the eleventh hour; let none, however, presume. Those who are most desirous to delay to the last are the most likely to come short after all. Disease may lock up the senses long before dissolution, or death may come suddenly; besides, the older we grow in sin, the more hardened we are in it. How does it become us all then *immediately* to seek for mercy, and choose that one thing needful that cannot be taken from us."

"It afforded me some degree of encouragement that I was rendered useful in any way. My morning lecture at Silver Street afforded me much pleasure, by accounts which I received of good being done. One instance I will here relate:—I dreamed one night that I was called to preach, but when in the pulpit, I found the wind so strong, as to be unable to approach the front to give out the text. The passage I had chosen in my dream was Prov. xvii. 1. When I awoke, I could not recollect what the words were; but having the Bible by my bed-side, I turned to it, and found that they were these, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifice with strife." The words did not make any particular impression at first, but afterwards they so followed me, that I thought I would take them for a text. I found it

rather difficult to make a plan on them agreeable to my wishes: at last I threw together two or three observations, and delivered a discourse from them. Very soon after, I received a letter, informing me of the happy effects produced by this sermon on the heart and life of an individual, who described herself as having been a "sinner in the high road to destruction." She became an exemplary Christian, and is, I believe, now walking in the way to heaven. —From this circumstance I wish to remark, that I place no confidence in dreams, as they arise from a variety of causes; but I think sometimes we may go into an opposite extreme. If any thing valuable is suggested, even in a dream, we do well to attend to it; and thus our sleeping hours may be rendered profitable, as well as our waking ones.—From the above circumstance I would also observe, how necessary it is for ministers to adopt that mode of preaching which comes home to the bosoms and the hearts of the people. Let me entreat all young ministers to avoid the temptation so common to them, of attempting to appear as something superior in the mere display of intellect, and the gaudy shew of language. Not regardless of the improvement of natural abilities, not despising helps from any quarter, not undervaluing sterling eloquence, let the pointed arrows of divine truth be directed to the heart. I am no enemy to close reasoning, sound argument, or propriety of arrangement; but I am persuaded, that after a clear elucidation of the text, the more a minister can engage the affections, throw himself into the heart of his auditors, and thus pos-

sess the whole soul, the better. We have had in this metropolis a model, which many would do well to remember, I mean the late respected and useful Henry Foster. Possessed of no natural eloquence, no vivid imagination, no extraordinary genius, no vast depths of learning; his appropriate quotations of Scripture, his unparalleled delineations of human nature, his plain and just selection of images, his striking descriptions of Christian experience, and, above all, his solemn, close, and affecting addresses to the heart, were such, that the attention was generally fixed, and the congregation went away out of love with themselves, but with a determination again to hear a man that did not play with their fancies, shoot over their heads, or present them with what cost him nothing."

"But to return to my own history. Notwithstanding I had engaged so much in public preaching, and, my labours rendered somewhat useful, still I was but a novice; not twenty years of age, my classical knowledge was but small, and my theological attainments, in my own view at least, but superficial. An offer was made to send me to one of the universities, but my reverend friend Mr. Wills, taking into consideration the little prospect of preferment, and that as I possessed a talent for preaching, it might be a loss of time to be precluded so long from active service, he therefore proposed my being placed in the academy at Hoxton, where I could pursue my studies without being altogether excluded from the pulpit on the Lord's Day."

Before I proceed to narrate the circumstances of

Mr. Buck's admission into this seminary, I shall close this chapter with the solemn and interesting reflections with which he entered upon the year 1791. The paper is dated January 1st, and is entitled,

A MINISTERIAL THOUGHT.

"Think, seriously think, O my soul, what an important work thou art now engaged in! An ambassador for God; a herald, a messenger from the Court of Heaven! How solemn the office; how arduous the task! What need of love to speak to dying mortals, who are careless about their precious souls; what need of zeal to continually warn such to flee from the wrath to come; what need of faithfulness to keep nothing back, but to declare the whole counsel of God to them, that they may see and know their tremendous situation; what need of assiduity and diligence in exhorting them to turn from dead works to the living God, and reminding them of their awful and dangerous state, in playing about the brink of eternal ruin! what need of patience, when thy reproofs recoil back again on thyself, and when reviled and rejected by them; what need of courage, boldly to set forth the truths of God, and not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; what need of humility to speak the word with all plainness and simplicity of mind, so that no offence may be given to the church of God by vain pomposity or inconsistent ostentation; what need of setting a good example in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; what need of knowledge of

the Scriptures, of sin, of the heart, of God, of Satan, that things suitable may be delivered to every case; what necessity for a constant looking to, and depending upon the Holy Spirit, to make the word effectual to the salvation of sinners, and consolation of saints. O, my God, how shall I, the unworthiest of all thy creatures, be able to go forward in this great work. I am but a stripling to engage in *so* awful a business. O help me, thou blessed Jesus, that as I have put my hand to the plough, I may not look back; for awful, thrice awful will it be for me, if that should be the case, for thou hast said, "Such are not fit for the kingdom of God." O let me therefore be found faithful even unto death; let not the blood of any poor sinner be required at my hands. I know I am weak, but I implore strength of thee to enable me to persevere. Let my feeble attempts be crowned with abundant success. I desire, O God, to be useful in thy cause; make me an instrument in thy hands, of bringing wandering souls home to thee the great Shepherd. But O let me remember, with shame and confusion of face, how slothful and negligent I have been! how cold when discoursing on the most animating truths! how backward and indifferent in speaking of thy love and goodness! Shame be to me, to do so little for such a kind Saviour! O give me a heart, dear Lord, to mourn more for my carelessness about thee and thy everlasting gospel. I look up to thee to grant me more grace to speak of thee with all earnestness on the one hand, and to adorn thy doctrine in all things on the other.

It is true, the work of the ministry is an awful work, but yet it is honourable. That God should choose a worm, sinful dust and ashes, to speak to the immortal souls of men. How condescending and wonderful! But, alas! how many are there that take the name of the ministers of God, when at the same time, they are serving the devil; whose life and conduct prove that they are strangers to grace; who pretend to preach Christ, but never yet experienced his love in their hearts; who profess to know him, but in works deny him. O miserable mortals, blind leading the blind; little do they think of the worth of never dying souls! What a sad account will they have to render at the last day, when thousands will be ready to curse them for not being faithful to their souls, and not exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come. O my soul, come not thou into their assembly here, and, O God, suffer me not to be drawn forth with these ministers of iniquity hereafter, for great must be their punishment, even everlasting burnings, blackness of darkness, inexpressible torment, for ever and ever. Let me, therefore, never trifle with souls, but labour with all diligence to turn men from darkness to light, from the love of sin to the love of God, from the pursuit of this evil world to the pursuit of a better. But, Lord, the work is thine own, and thou hast declared thy word shall not return unto thee void; I therefore desire to depend on thee alone; all human aid will avail nothing without thy divine power. Thy Spirit must unlock the heart, convey the truth, and make it effectual for the conversion of poor sinners. Lord,

enable me to speak, but do thou bless, or all will be in vain. Give me, if it be thy adorable will, many spiritual children, and prepare me for and strengthen me for every trial. And O, my dear Saviour, let me never be allured or led away by the deceitful smiles of an evil world. Thou knowest how ready I am to hearken to their illusive whispers; keep me then from every snare, be as a wall of fire round about me: but particularly would I pray against those dreadful, yea, artful enemies, self and pride, that lay so near, yea, live *too much* in my heart. Surely I have need to pray with trembling, I have need to study with trembling, I have need to converse with trembling, I have need to preach with trembling, lest those monsters should gain a still greater power over me, and be the means of retarding my progress in the important undertaking.

And as I know not the difficulties, and am not aware of the innumerable trials I may meet with, I now beseech thee to give strength for the day; and do thou teach me to bear every affliction with all long-suffering, patience, resignation, and contentment. I now, therefore, dedicate myself to thee this day, trusting thou wilt not let me go, henceforth nor for ever. Amen.

CHAP. II.

From Mr. Buck's entering upon preparatory Studies for the Ministry, to his settlement at Sheerness.

PERHAPS no candidate for the sacred ministry ever entered upon academical studies with a deeper sense of the importance of the work to which he was devoting himself, than the subject of these memoirs. He powerfully felt that his attainments were to be wholly subservient to his usefulness as a Christian divine. At the time of Mr. Buck's admission, Hoxton Academy was in its infancy: strong prejudices were entertained against it by the regular dissenters and methodists. The former were jealous of the prerogatives of their ancient Homerton, and the latter considered it as an unnecessary, and even impious encroachment upon divine teaching. But its benevolent founders well knew that the circumstances of the Christian world imperiously demanded such an institution.—Many young men were rising up, endowed with the talents, and imbued with the spirit of preaching. Homerton would not then receive any whose zeal had hurried them into the flagrant iniquity of ascending a pulpit without first passing through academical bowers; and the methodists welcomed all who offered themselves, with little or no discrimination. Homerton

required ministers to be profound scholars; the methodists ran into the other extreme. An academy that should embrace the happy medium, that should work up and employ all the materials that would otherwise have been useless or injurious to the interests of religion, in the shortest time and to the best purpose, was a *desideratum*. This necessity gave birth to the seminary in question. At its commencement, it merely professed to teach the rudiments of classical learning, and the *Principia* of theology. The term of study was sufficiently limited, and that was greatly encroached upon by the preaching of the students, almost as soon as they entered. The old dissenters laughed, and cracked their jokes about hot beds, mushrooms, and nurseries; the enemies of academical institutions, however, began to feel the influence of this rising seminary; the unprejudiced and thoughtful of all parties perceived, that with proper management and growing improvement, it would in a few years produce a revolution in the public mind, favourable at once to the interests of learning and piety. What they anticipated soon came to pass, and *Hoxton College*, as it is somewhat pompously called by a few of its friends, now stands pre-eminent among its predecessors and contemporaries. It has greatly enlarged the plan of instruction, and extended the term of study; having its Professors of Humanity, of Belles Lettres, of Natural and Moral Philosophy. The Divinity chair has been long filled by the Rev. Robert Simpson, D. D. who, on account of his age, and growing infirmities, is expected to give

place to one of the first theologians of his age.—For all this it is, under God, chiefly indebted to Thomas Wilson, Esq. With a handsome fortune, his father left him, as a legacy, the care of this seminary, which had risen under his auspices; and he has indeed cherished it with a zeal, assiduity, and perseverance altogether unparalleled in the history of Christian benevolence. His son, Mr. Joshua Wilson, is "soaring" also "to the regions of his sire," and promises to sustain with equal energy the cause which from his early life has been associated with his best feelings and most ardent pursuits.

The method in which candidates are introduced into this and other similar institutions, may be considered as one great cause of their prosperity and usefulness. Unequivocal evidences of personal religion are indispensible. The individuals are not only recommended by competent persons, and the Christian society with which they are connected; but they undergo the strictest examination of a committee of wise and pious ministers and laymen, before whom they give an account of their experience in the things of God, and a statement of the doctrines which they believe. At Hoxton also a trial is made of their gifts as public speakers, and they have then to undergo in the seminary a probation of three months.

Through all these preliminary steps Mr. Buck passed with credit to himself. In the paper which lies before me, entitled, "A brief Account of the Conversion and Experience of C. B., as delivered to the Tutor, Treasurer, and Committee of the

Evangelical Academy, the 6th day of May 1791," he relates, in substance, what has been already detailed.

The following extract will convey some idea of the views which he entertained of the work of the ministry, and likewise of the doctrines which it was his purpose, by every means in his power, to exhibit and defend.

"With respect to the work of the ministry, I can truly say, before him to whom I must give an account, that I desire not to enter into it for the sake of filthy lucre, to gain admiration or praise, or any way to bring ease to myself, but to glorify my Lord and Master, and to win souls to him. I am conscious it is a work of the greatest weight and importance; but yet such delight do I feel in it, that I would desire it before any other office under the sun. And if the Lord has given me a small talent, it is my earnest wish to improve it for his glory, and the good of my fellow-mortals, and ever to keep in view what the apostle has observed, 'to preach not *myself*, but Christ Jesus the Lord.'

"With regard to my sentiments, I believe that by nature all men are sinners, that all have fallen in Adam, that they are obnoxious to the wrath of an offended God, and have no ability to save themselves! That the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the adorable Trinity, who is co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, out of free and unspeakable love, took upon himself the form of a man, came into this world, suffered, and died for poor sinners, even for those his elect, whom the Father gave him

from eternity, and thereby exempted them from the wrath of God, magnified his law, and made it honourable, brought in an everlasting righteousness, bought a pardon for our sins, and effected a complete and eternal salvation for us! I believe that no man in himself has any free will or power to return to God; that he must be born again by the Eternal Spirit before he can love or serve him; that all his own works are imperfect, and that he must be justified by free grace alone, according to the idea of the apostle, 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.'

"As to baptism, I would just observe, that as infants were admitted under the Old Testament dispensation, why should they be refused under the New? especially as our Lord lays down no command to the contrary, but gives a charge to baptize nations, and then, of course, infants must be included."

It is a little to be regretted, that neither in his journal of the period which he spent at this seminary, nor in his letters to his friends, has Mr. Buck given any account of his studies, and the manner of employing his time. One thing, however, of much greater importance, is strikingly evident, that his classical pursuits, and the various temptations which abound in the very best regulated institutions of this nature, did not in the slightest degree diminish the seriousness of his spirit, or impair his devotedness to the glory of God, and the welfare of immortal souls.

His numerous engagements to preach in very distant places, and the ardour with which he fulfilled them, must indeed have greatly impeded his progress in learning: yet his subsequent labours prove, that notwithstanding these disadvantages, he must have been a diligent and persevering student, especially of theology. He seems to have exhibited much of Richard Baxter's excellent spirit, and to have laid down for himself the rule upon which that venerable man declared he uniformly acted.

"Necessity should be a great disposer of a minister's course of study and labours. If we were sufficient for every thing, we might fall upon every thing, and take in order the whole Encyclopædia. But life is short, and eternal things are necessary, and the souls that depend upon our teaching are precious. I confess necessity has been the conductor of my studies and life; it chooseth what book I shall read, and tells me when and how long; it chooseth my text, and makes my sermon for matter and manner."

Mr. Buck's hours of leisure while at the academy appear to have been chiefly spent in writing his diary, and in epistolary correspondence. In the former he records his religious experience, and in the latter he enters more at large into his habits of thinking, and unfolds to his friends his views and prospects in life. —The most interesting parts of both will fill up this chasm in his history.

"Saturday, July 30.—Arrived safe at Bristol this morning, through the great goodness of my gracious Lord. The company in the coach were agreeable, and the latter part of our journey was taken up in religious conversation. O! for more knowledge of and converse with him whom my soul loveth.

"Sunday, July 31.—Preached this morning at seven o'clock, at the Tabernacle, from Isaiah, xxiv. 15. "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires." Though much unprepared for preaching, I thank my God I experienced some degree of liberty.—O! that it may be a savour of life unto life to all that heard it.

"Preached at Kingswood this morning and afternoon. My text in the morning was Psalm lxxxiv. 11. and I can say of a truth, the Lord was with me. In the afternoon preached from Rom. ii. 9, 10.; but, O, what a change! My Lord had hid his face, and it was all darkness. It was a burden to me to speak, and I was glad when I had concluded my sermon. O my depraved, cold, and indifferent heart, how subject to changes! O God, return again to my waiting soul, that I may be refreshed.

"Tuesday, August 2.—Heard several deliver their experience at the Society belonging to the Tabernacle, and trust it was a profitable opportunity. O that I may experience more of the loving-kindness of my God. Surely he has done great things for my soul, whereof I am glad. May I ever be sensible of his kindness, and be grateful for the same. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?

"Wednesday, August 3.—Heard Rev. Mr. Biddulph this morning at Mary Port Church. His text was Jerem. xxxii. 40.—He is a sweet and experimental preacher.—There is nothing like entering into the feelings of the people, and speaking simply to the heart; this sort of preaching generally is the most useful, and the most honoured by God. O that I may be taught to declare the truth with simplicity and plainness. In the evening heard Mr. Wills at the Tabernacle, from Rev. iii. 18. It was a searching sermon. May it tend to rouse the lukewarm professor, as well as to excite the real believer to greater diligence. Amen.

"Thursday, August 4.—Heard Mr. Collins at Hope Chapel, from Heb. ix. 27, 28. Could wish that he preached with a little more life and animation. Surely the cause of Christ demands the most ardent zeal and the greatest earnestness. To speak to dying mortals is of the highest importance, and therefore needs great faithfulness and activity. The Lord grant that I may always speak with power, and with the Spirit.

"Saturday, August 6.—Was much delighted in transcribing a most precious account of a person on his dying bed; part of whose language was this:—"I never could have imagined or believed, that I could have felt the consolation I now feel, or have met death as I now meet it; and yet I see that I am a sink of iniquity, and that my whole life has been abominable." O what happy exits do many of the Lord's dear people make. My soul, startle not at the idea of death; Jesus has taken away the sting; so

that he is no longer a dreadful monster, to terrify, but a welcome servant, to introduce me to the blest abodes of my gracious Redeemer. May I then sing with the poet,

> "Death cannot make my soul afraid,
> If God be with me there;
> Soft is the passage through the shade,
> And all the prospect fair."

"Tuesday, August 9.—Met the Society at Tabernacle, when several declared what wonderful things the Lord had done for their souls, in calling them out of a state of nature into a state of grace, and strengthening and comforting their souls in the way through the wilderness. These meetings are profitable, when conducted aright, as they tend to establish the weak, and to comfort those that mourn. O Lord, do thou teach me to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, while I endeavour through thy grace to instruct my fellow-pilgrims in the way to Zion.

"Wednesday, August 10.—Preached at Tabernacle this evening, from Acts, xxvi. 28. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Could not speak with much liberty.—How hard is it to stand up without the light of thy countenance, O God! Surely the work of the ministry is no easy work! My soul is now under the cloud, and darkness pervades my mind. All terrestrial things appear insipid, and afford no relief to my dejected soul. But, Lord, wilt not thou look upon me again? O return, return, dear Redeemer, that I may rejoice in thy smiles.

"Thursday, August 11.—This day I have been much dejected; but desire to remember what the Psalmist observes, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The Lord is all-sufficient and gracious, and will not leave nor forsake his people.

"O let me then at length be taught,
What still I am so slow to learn,
That God is love, and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn."

In the evening heard Mr. Hezekiah Jones, at Lady Huntingdon's Chapel, from Hosea, ii. 14, 15. "I will allure her," &c. One of his remarks was this, "The Vine of our comfort is always planted in the valley of humiliation." I have reason to be thankful for the opportunity, for the word was sweet and profitable. O that I may digest it by faith and prayer, and that the effect of it may be seen in my life and conversation. Amen.

"Saturday, August 13.—Attended prayer-meeting, when several prayed with much earnestness. O that I could pray with more fervency; but, alas! it is often a burden to me. I go to a throne of grace, with the same coldness as if I were praying to a stock or a stone. And when I do find a little liberty, I then forget to look for answers to my prayers. Dear Lord, teach me to pray; help me to supplicate thee with more delight and joy. May it be a sweet work to my soul, and may I consider it as my greatest honour and privilege to come before thee.

"Saturday, August 20.—Arrived at Bristol,

much fatigued. May I be reminded that my journey through this wilderness, though difficult, is short. Soon the time will come, when I shall be tired no more, but rest in the realms of unspeakable bliss. O gracious Saviour, help me to look forward with joy and gratitude to that glorious day, when I shall be released from every pain, and exempt from all sin.

"Saturday, August 27.—Gave a word of exhortation at the Society at Tabernacle, Wotton Underedge. May the Lord follow it with his blessing. O that I could speak more experimentally, more to the heart than I do. Lord, do thou teach me how to speak, that it may not be to please self, but to profit souls. This is a matter of great importance, and it is the desire of my soul to be more sensible of it. Lord grant it, for thy name's sake. Amen.

"Wednesday, August 31.—Heard Mr. Joss at Bristol Tabernacle, on Isaiah, xxv. 4. "A refuge from the storm." It was a sweet and experimental discourse. He was led to show the various storms Christians met with in their way to heaven, and pointed them to the only refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ.—My soul, fly, fly to him under every distress. Make him thy all; use him in all; love him in all, and live to him in all. Draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee; speak, and I must hear.

"Thursday, September 1.—"Spent the evening with the Reverend Mr. Bishop and some friends. O what a privilege is it to meet with those who love to converse about the dear Immanuel! O that I could speak more to his praise, but alas! my conversation is more about earth than heaven, more on

temporal than spiritual things. The Lord give me a heavenly mind, that it may be always my delight to speak of heavenly things.

"Friday, September 2.—Through the kind providence of my God, I arrived safe in London. Blessed be his name, for taking me out, and bringing me in, and preserving me from every evil. Now will I raise my Ebenezer, and say, Hitherto hath the Lord helped me. May his presence be with me continually in life and in death, and may I reign with him in the world above to all eternity. Amen."

No. I.

"Hoxton, Nov. 29, 1791.

"Dear Friend—I suppose you think it strange that I have not fulfilled my promise sooner. I intended to have wrote before I went to Bristol; but thinking I should see you in my way back from thence, was the occasion of my not writing. But, however, I hope this will find you well, both in body and soul. When I recal to mind the past friendship that subsisted between us, it affects me much to think how lax we are in our correspondence now. What has been the cause of the late coldness and indifference in my friend, I know not. I remember the time when we took sweet counsel and walked together in the greatest *love and unity*. And I am sure I can take up the words that were applied to Jonathan, and say, "Very pleasant hast thou been

to me; thy affection to me was wonderful." O that I had no reason to think otherwise now. If I have given you any offence, be faithful, and tell me. If not, how is it that you could pass by the *vestry door*, and not enquire for your friend (who I trust wishes you the best of blessings) and whom you had not seen for some time. But to leave this subject, I would ask you how it is with the best, the immortal part. I hope the gracious Redeemer is more precious to you than ever. To keep up a spiritual correspondence with *him* is a happiness indeed. I trust your worldly concerns do not slacken you in respect to heavenly and eternal matters. It is an unspeakable mercy, in the midst of temporal affairs, not to forget spiritual. O that both you and I may be kept near our dear Lord, and experience more of the power of his grace in our hearts. We are surrounded with enemies, and beset with snares. The world is alluring, sin is opposing, the devil is deceiving. Great God, do thou preserve us from every evil; grant that we may endure unto the end, and be saved at last, through the blood and righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I now conclude, and believe me ever to be,

"Your sincere friend and well wisher,

"C. B."

No. II.

Mr. Boulton, Hillsley, Gloucestershire.

" Hoxton, 16th Dec. 1791.

" Dear Friend—By a letter from Mr. Symmons, I had the disagreeable news of your father's death; an event which I little expected. May it remind us of our dissolution, and excite us to be ready to meet our God. The loss of a tender parent must indeed occasion no small grief; but yet the *sweet hope* of meeting *him* again in the realms of bliss, yields some consolation, even in the midst of sorrow. O for the happy day when we shall be called to dwell with Jesus. Why should we tremble at the last enemy, since he will break the chain of our mortality, that we may fly to our adorable Redeemer. What is there so desirable, what so satisfactory here, that we should wish to stay? Alas, all below the skies is vanity and vexation of spirit! Come then, my brother, let us travel on to the house appointed for all living. Let us anticipate the joyful moment, when we shall make our exit from this vain world. Soon, very soon, shall we reach the climes of endless felicity! No loss of friends, no distress of mind, no pain of body there! Well may we sing, with the poet,

" There shall we bathe our weary souls
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across *our* peaceful breast."

" I hope this bereaving providence will be sancti-

fied to you and all the family. Your God still lives to bless you with every spiritual blessing. He will gently lead you through the rugged wilderness, and provide for and protect you continually. He is better than ten fathers, and if he takes away one comfort, it is to give you another. Confide in him then under every trial, "casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." That you may ever enjoy much of the light of his countenance, and live to his glory, is the earnest prayer of your unworthy brother in the best bonds.

"C. B."

"Monday, July 9, 1792.—Attended the society of young persons at the Tabernacle, Wotton Under-edge, and spoke to them from 1 Tim. iv. 12. "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and purity." Observed to them how delightful it was to see divine grace stamped upon young minds, and how lovely to behold the flowers of youth, bending toward the Sun of Righteousness. Was led to observe to them how necessary a good example is, and that it should be their constant aim to adorn the doctrines of God their Saviour in all things.

"Tuesday, July 10.—Preached at the Baptist Meeting, Wotton, from Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." Endea-

voured to show the motives believers have to excite them to rejoice, and the extent of this too much neglected duty, " to rejoice alway." Did not experience much liberty, but hope it was salutary to some. O Lord, the word is thine, do thou prosper it. Thou knowest it is the desire of my heart to do good. Put honour, therefore, upon my unworthy ministry, by making me a successful labourer in thy vineyard. O that I may be the happy instrument of converting souls. May it ever be my aim, in my conversation, my preaching, and my example, to bring my fellow mortals to a participation of the blessings of the everlasting gospel. May I ever abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that my labour is not in vain in the Lord.

" Wednesday, July 11.—Preached at Tabernacle, Wotton, from Psalm xxxvi. 9. " For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Did not experience much enlargement of mind, but hope the word was not preached in vain. I wish ever to remember, that success does not depend upon my frames; that my usefulness does not arise from any thing I feel in my own breast, but upon him who hath the hearts of all men in his hands. Were I to use the greatest eloquence, and was well versed in the art of persuasion, or had I the tongue of an angel, it would all be ineffectual without a divine power. He only who made the heart can change it. It is thine, therefore, O Holy Spirit, to open the eyes of the blind; it is thine to console the drooping heart, and revive the distressed mind; it is thine to render the word preached pro-

fitable, and to enable men to receive and rejoice in the truth; it is thine to make the ministers of the everlasting gospel useful, to bless them in their work, to encourage them in their difficulties, and to support them in all their afflictions. May my confidence therefore be on thee and thee alone.

"Thursday, July 12.—Preached at Union Chapel, Uley, Gloucestershire. God grant good may be done. Found a degree of liberty. O it is sweet to preach of the love of a dear Redeemer, when under the smiles of his countenance. Let the ignorant world inveigh against the experience of his ministers and people, and call it enthusiasm if they please. If to be enabled to rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh be enthusiasm, may God evermore bless me with it. Let true believers be deemed as mad fanatics, may it be my honour and privilege to be one of the despised number. Let the ministers of the gospel be accounted as *religious mechanics*, to work upon the minds of the ignorant, or as those men who are pests to society, and would turn the world upside down; yet may I be one, who shall dare to be singular, and to preach the truth as it is in Jesus with all boldness, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

"Friday, July 13.—Preached at Kingswood, Gloucestershire, on Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, for even to-day do I declare, that I will render double unto thee." The place was much crowded, and the people heard with great attention. Cannot help thinking, with what plainness and simplicity the gospel-message

ought to be delivered. Do I wish to do good, let me preach so that the lowest capacity may comprehend my meaning, yea so that all may understand. But, alas! my foolish heart is often dictating, how necessary it is to adorn the truth with tawdry inventions of my own or others, in order to please the fancy of the gay and polite, and thus to endeavour to acquire popularity. O vanity, vanity! Is not this frequently the bane of usefulness! O, my soul, beware of this accommodating art; for surely this is preaching myself, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. Gracious God, give me a single eye and a sincere heart, and then will my tongue be employed in the best and most unaffected eloquence, and on the noblest and most sublime subject, the love of God to rebellious man.

" Saturday, July 14.—Was much pleased in reading Mr. Hervey's Sermons on the Godhead of Christ, which he clearly proves, from the works he wrought, from the honours that were paid him, and from the nature of his mediatorial office. Blessed Jesus, the whole Bible confirms thy divinity, and whoever reads it without being convicted of this, must undoubtedly be blind. O help me to proclaim, delight in, and defend this great article of Christianity. May I adore thee as my God, my friend, my only Saviour, and my all in all. And while the giddy multitude are going about, and saying Who will show us any good; Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.

" Monday, July 16.—Met the society of young people at Tabernacle, Wotton. Expounded Psalm

cxlii. from which I observed what a tendency afflictions have to lead the soul to God, and that we never esteem him more, or pray to him with such great fervency, as when all human helps fail us. And O what an unspeakable mercy, that though we are subject to changes in ourselves, and meet with strange revolutions in the world, yet our Jesus is invariable, a constant friend, a sure protector, a safe guide, a kind father, and a faithful God. My soul, rest then upon him alone, and let him be thy delight, thy all in all.

"Tuesday, July 17.—Preached at Dursley, Gloucestershire, from Hebrews, xii. 1. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Was rather low, and did not experience much liberty, but have reason to believe the word was useful and consolatory to some. O that I could speak with more animation, and with a greater dependance upon the Holy Spirit for assistance. Surely to be cool upon such topics as the sacred volume affords, at once proves that my heart is little impressed with the importance of the subject. O God, warm my heart with a sense of thy love, and remove all supineness from me, and let my tongue be as the pen of a ready writer to declare thy truth, and speak of thy goodness to the children of men.

"Thursday, July 19.—Preached at Hillsley, from Acts, xv. 36. "And see how they do." This being the place where I was born, many attended from motives of curiosity. The Lord, I trust, was with me. I exhorted them to enquire into the state of

their souls, and to ask themselves how matters stood between God and them. O that God may follow the word with his blessing, without which it will be of no avail. O that I had this more in view. Sometimes I am ready to think, when I have been enabled to preach with freedom, and to discuss my subject with a seeming propriety, that then good must be done; but ah! it is well for me to recollect, that if I could speak like an angel, or if I always enjoyed liberty, it would not be the means of comforting or converting one soul without a divine and supernatural power attending it.

" Saturday, July 21.—Came to Dursley. This day have done little or nothing. May I not say, " I have lost a day." How backward my heart to meditation; how indifferent about the best things! How unconcerned about the soul! Lord have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, and pardon my sloth. I am under ten thousand obligations to live in thy fear all the day long, and yet, alas! I have hardly so much as one spiritual thought. O sin, what hast thou done! Thou hast found me, O mine enemy, to rob me of my peace, to deprive me of communion with my God, and to cause me to live at a distance from him. O cursed evil, the " fruitful parent of woes of all dimensions," may I set my face against thee for ever, and oppose thee with all the powers of my soul, and all the strength I have.

" Monday, July 23.—Preached at Uley, Gloucestershire, from 2 Cor. xiii. 5. " Examine yourselves." Observed, that self-examination is an im-

portant duty; but *too* much neglected by the majority of professors. And I am afraid it is really the case. Thousands are at ease in Zion; have a name to live, while they are dead. O let me be faithful therefore in my mission, lest their blood should be required at my hand. How careful should I be, lest fear should gain ascendancy over me on the one hand, or interest should influence me on the other. Should I not press this duty upon the conscience in every sermon? What! shall I address the fancies of men, and endeavour to please their minds, instead of profiting their hearts? God forbid! May God the Spirit grant that I may deal much in application; whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, may my constant language be to all, "Examine yourselves."

"Saturday, July 28.—Was profited, I trust, by perusing a piece of the celebrated Mr. Hervey's, intitled, "Consolation to the Afflicted." One of his observations is this—"Perhaps, you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous, and that if it had been of some other kind you could more cheerfully submit, more easily bear it. But you are in the hand of an all-wise Physician, who joins to the bowels of infinite love, the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case. He sees into the remotest events; and though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with the exactest propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself, therefore, the visitation which he appoints, is the very properest recipe in the dispensatory of heaven." O that I could realize this great truth, and

so to behold all things with an eye of faith, as to know it shall work together for my good.

" Sabbath-day, July 29.—Preached twice at the Tabernacle, Bristol. The congregation large and attentive. O that I may have some seals to my ministry here. It is my comfort that the Lord can bless the weakest instruments. The treasure is put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of men.

" Was comforted in attending the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. O blessed Jesus, help me to live by faith upon thee, to eat of thee, the living bread, that my soul may be replenished, and my heart animated. O let me recollect the love of a groaning, bleeding, dying Saviour; let me consider his unbounded compassion, to give even himself for men, that they might live for ever with him. O let my right hand forget her cunning, when I forget this thy love, O thou adorable Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

" Tuesday, July 31.—Heard Mr. Ford, at Lady Huntingdon's Chapel, Bristol. His text was Proverbs, x. 24. " The desire of the righteous shall be granted." He made an experimental, and, I trust, profitable discourse. Experimental preaching seems most likely to do good. To speak *from* the heart is the best way to speak *to* the heart. And let me remember, that to be useful to others, I must feel something myself. I must expect to be afflicted, in order to strengthen the afflicted. I must expect to be tempted, in order to succour the tempted. I must expect to be persecuted, in order to encourage

the persecuted. I must expect to be tried, in order to comfort the tried. O what has a real minister of God to do, to suffer, to bear, that he may be an instrument of doing good! But, O my soul, despair not; Jesus is sufficient; he will strengthen my hands, he will instruct my soul, he will grant my desires!

"Wednesday, August 1.—Heard Mr. Wills, at Tabernacle, on Proverbs, ii. 4, 5. "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." The Lord be praised that there are some who faithfully bear testimony of and to the truth as it is in Jesus! Who can help saying, Lord, send more such into thy vineyard. O that ministers in general were more zealous in the cause of Christ, and more desirous to bring souls to him than they are! But, alas, how many are preaching themselves, endeavouring to display their abilities, to please their auditories, without ever remembering that the great end of the gospel ministry is to make men wise unto salvation. O God, suffer me never to be a minister, if I am not a faithful one. Amen.

"Monday, August 6.—Heard Mr. Kestell, at Tabernacle, on Heb. vi. 17, 18. He appears to be a sincere man, and a plain simple preacher. It would be well if the truth were preached with more simplicity than it is. Surely ministers cannot be too plain in their address to ignorant, obdurate sinners. The generality of congregations consist of poor illiterate people, and therefore stand in need of simple

teaching. O Lord, do thou be my instructor, let me never speak, but that the most ignorant may understand, and be profited. For what is the end of preaching the gospel, but that people may be benefited. While I therefore on the one hand beware of all low similies and disgustful language, may I on the other be careful to speak so that the lowest capacity may comprehend.

"Wednesday, August 8.—Heard Mr. Scott preach at Tabernacle, on Galatians, ii. 19, 20. "I, through the law, am dead to the law," &c. &c. One of his remarks was, that *those who do not wish to have the law as a rule of life, have no rule for their lives*, or to that effect. Many, I believe, found it good to be there. O that I could but receive more comfort in attending public ordinances; but, alas, how cold is my frame, how stupid my heart! I see others rejoicing and thankful; but as for myself, how frequently am I dejected. I lose sight of the grand object, Jesus Christ. My thoughts are roving upon the vanities of the world, when I ought to be reflecting upon the goodness of God; my heart is wandering when I ought to be praying, and I am often repining when I should be praising. Behold I am vile, and my soul is little attached to the dear Redeemer. O Holy Spirit, descend, and let me be no longer cleaving to the dust, but with joy and patience run the way of thy commandment.

"Thursday, August 9.—Heard Mr. Hay, at Temple Chapel, on John, xv. 5. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for with-

out me ye can do nothing." He made some pithy remarks, and dwelt much on the applicatory part. It would be well if ministers in general would be more *close* in their application; and come to the point, by speaking faithfully to the conscience. A fine style may be pleasing, but a plain style is most profitable. Ministers should learn to speak in a familiar way, and that without degenerating into loose, extravagant, and low expressions. O my soul, let it be thy business to imitate him who was the best preacher that ever spoke, even that adorable Jesus who went about doing good.

"Friday, August 10.—Heard Mr. Wills, at Tabernacle, on Isaiah, liii. 11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." He first spake upon justification; 2d, The person justified, "righteous servant;" 3d, Those that were justifying "many;" 4th, How they were justified, "by his knowledge." The discourse was good, and I hope blessed to the hearers. O that I may benefit more by hearing. I wish to enjoy the comfort of the doctrines of the gospel. God grant that I may feel more of their power upon my heart; for what will thinking, what will hearing, what will preaching, what will talking of them avail, if I do not experience their blessedness? Come, therefore, O Lord, and bless me with an experimental knowledge of the truths of the everlasting gospel.

"Sabbath-day, August 12.—Preached at Tabernacle this morning from Hebrews, xi. 24, 25, 26. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,"

&c. &c. O that God may bless me with Moses's faith, and then I shall have Moses's obedience. Heard Mr. Scott preach at Kingswood in the morning, from Isaiah, xli. 17—30. I preached there in the afternoon, and blessed be God, found a little freedom. In the evening, heard Mr. Wills, at Tabernacle, on Matt. xxviii. 5. and afterwards heard Mr. Hill preach, out of doors, at Points-pool, to a very large auditory, on Acts, xvi. 30, 31. One of his remarks was, "Hate the devil for he hates you; there is no harm in that revenge." It was a blessed time, I believe, to many. God put shonour upon out of door preaching, and perhaps as many have been called that way as any. O God, increase the number of those that shall go forth with all boldness to speak thy word. Amen.

"Wednesday, August 15.—Received an unexpected hint from a friend, and though not agreeable to my feelings, may God make it profitable to my heart. Perhaps it is a message from him to draw me nearer to himself. Many a time hath he spoken to me; but yet have I refused to attend to his voice. I do, I know I do live at too great a distance from him, therefore "let the righteous smite me, it shall be esteemed a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer shall also be in their calamities." O my God, help me to take every thing patiently that shall be for my profit. Why should I complain, or who am I, that I should ever be brought to know thee, and to be honoured with the acquaintance of thy dear people. And why is it,

that such a depraved creature is not cast out from thy presence, to dwell in darkness for ever and ever!"

At the close of the Diary of this period, Mr. Buck inserted a collection of pithy and useful remarks, some of which may not be unacceptable in this place.

"Lightness of spirit sometimes brings darkness of soul.

"Sin is the most dreadful monster that walks the earth, but least suspected.

"God sends the weight of affliction to suppress the weed of pride.

"Great talkers are sometimes loose walkers.

"We often meet our greatest trials from our greatest friends.

"We cannot pluck a rose without a thorn, a comfort without a cross, a sweet without a bitter: we cannot have a friend, without an enemy, while in this vale of tears.

"We should think it strange for a man to choose to live in a dissecting room, or among dead bodies; and it would appear equally strange for a good man to delight to live with those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

"Were we to run a race, and a man were to be pulling us by the coat all the way, it would retard our progress, so it is the same by keeping company with the world; they hinder us from pressing toward the mark set before us.

"As a man cannot rest quietly when he knows thieves are in his house; so a good conscience will not rest if sin is in the heart.

"A good conscience is a servant that will keep (the house) the heart clean.

"The devil will always be playing his engine of malice, &c. to put out the fire of our love, but blessed be God, it will be always in vain.

"How inconsistent would it appear, if we had incurred the displeasure of his Majesty, to think of appeasing his wrath by a small gift, or worthless offering; but how much more inconsistent for us to be offering our works to God (which are called filthy rags) as the foundation of our acceptance, and to satisfy his justice.

"It proves there is something wrong in our life and conversation, when it will not bear reflection.

"Instead of coming more out of self, and getting into Christ, alas! we get more out of Christ, and more into self.

"Time is the boat that is carrying us swiftly into the ocean of eternity.

"What a mercy, to have a good hope in a bad time.

"A man may talk like an angel and act like a devil.

"There is no glory in our hope, if Christ is not the hope of our glory.

"Faith is a self applier.

"The anticipation of the glories of the world above should stimulate us to duty and diligence in the world below.

" As gratitude is one of the first of graces, so ingratitude is one of the worst of sins.

" Christians should look back to the fall by way of humiliation, and look forwards to glory by way of consolation.

" It is true Christ can do any thing without us, but we should remember we can do nothing without him. John xv. 5.

" The flower of youth never appears more beautiful than when it bends towards the Sun of Righteousness.

" Though God may seem to frown in his providences, yet he always smiles in his promises.

" As sin is the worst of diseases, it must have the best of Physicians *to cure it*.

" When we give way to sin, we put a sword into the enemy's hand to fight against us.

" One unguarded step of a believer perhaps may lay a foundation for his future uneasiness, even to the end of life.

" Daniel thought it better to die in a den and go to heaven, than live in a palace and go to hell.

" We cannot fully comprehend the dreadful nature of sin, because we cannot comprehend the greatness of the object against whom we sin; as sin is aggravating in proportion to the dignity of the object we sin against.

" O the condescension of Christ! He was born of a woman that we might be born of God.

" How humiliating is the character given to man; —he is dust. What is the rich man but dust exalted; what is the gay man but dust disguised; what is

the worldling but dust depraved; what the beautiful but dust refined!

"Christ's grace and righteousness are the only keys that can open the gate of heaven; yet how do many attempt to open that gate by the keys of their own works and resolutions.

"We often pray to God that we may be humble, but we do not like the measures he takes to make us so.

"The hearts of God's people are sometimes good books, for a minister to read; and good texts for him to preach upon.

"Though there may be such a thing as knowledge without grace, yet there is no grace without knowledge.

"Those who pray most *for* their ministers, may expect to have most *from* their ministers.

"We all ought to endeavour to be useful in our place. Those who cannot speak *for* God *to* sinners, should speak *to* God *for* sinners.

"Though God's eye be upon all the world, yet his heart only is upon his church.

"As unbelief is the worst of evils, so believing is the greatest of graces.

"When the world solicits us to spend our time in the pursuit of their pleasures, let us tell them that we have but one life, and even that is a short one; and therefore we cannot spare time to do as they do.

"When we look back upon the book of our past lives, we shall see a great many blank leaves there, and many on which the most trifling things are written."

No. III.

Hoxton, 30th Jan. 1792.

"Dear C——, In my last, I believe, I promised to write soon, but having been so much engaged lately, I have failed to fulfil my promise. I am at present quite indisposed, through a pain in my breast. The last evening I preached at Silver Street Chapel, but it was with difficulty I got through the service. O when will that happy day arrive, when I shall be released from all pain, when this frail tabernacle of mine must be taken down? The pins thereof are already loose, and I often think it will not be long before I shall be brought to the house appointed for all living. Blessed be God, I cannot say the fear of death much distresses me. O that I may be more and more prepared for it. Gracious Redeemer! let me live to thy glory while I do live, and when I die may I enter into thy joy: yet help me to say with thy servant, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. May I not murmur though I mourn, but patiently endure, ever remembering to keep

"One eye on death, and one full fix'd on heaven."

"I hope you, my dear brother, find the work of the Lord pleasant: he is a gracious Master to work for, and his faithful ministers ever lay near his heart. For my own part, I am ashamed when I consider how little I speak of, for, or to him. O that I may be more diligent, always abounding in the

work of the Lord; yea, I earnestly pray that both of us may prove zealous and successful messengers of the everlasting Gospel. I must now conclude, wishing you much of our Lord's presence, and a safe journey to town, where I trust we shall have a happy interview.

"I am, my dear Brother,

"Your's very affectionately,

"C. B."

No. IV.

"Hoxton, 31st January, 1792.

"Dear Friend—Notwithstanding I am much indisposed, through a return of my old complaint, yet I gladly embrace the opportunity of sending you a few lines. I was particularly happy the other evening in hearing of the Lord's gracious dealings with my brethren, and was exceedingly charmed and edified by the heavenly eloquence and pious breathings of a female orator. My soul was filled with a delightful wonder, and I was transported in a moment, as it were, to the celestial regions! Surely who could but feel, who could but rejoice, who could but be grateful, on hearing the genuine experience of a heaven-born soul? I am aware that meetings of this kind are censured, and that by many well-meaning people, who tell us, that in the relation of our experience we give way to flights of fancy, and are strongly led by a spirit of enthusiasm. But, if to declare the loving-kindness of the

Lord; if to glory in him as the only Saviour; if to give thanks for unmerited favours, if to call to mind his past dealings, if to supplicate for more grace, if to rejoice in him with a joy unspeakable, be enthusiasm, then let me have the honour of being such an enthusiast.

"I hope you are yet soaring above all sublunary things, and growing in all the graces of the Eternal Spirit. I know you are subject to many bodily pains; but blessed be God, *that* cannot hinder the prosperity of the soul. Afflictions of other kinds you may not be exempt from, and indeed when they are sanctified, they prove salutary lessons. "And (says one) suppose the furnace be seven times hotter, it is but to make us seven times better. Fiery trials make golden Christians." And how can it be otherwise, when the Lord himself has promised to be with us. How sweet those words, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." O that this gracious promise may be applied by the blessed Spirit to us, so that our spiritual strength may be renewed, and our hearts enlarged, to run the way of his commandments; and soon, very soon, the time will come, when we shall be called from all weariness to rest, from pain to pleasure, from darkness to everlasting light. We now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Ephraim will then no more offend his gracious Father, but be a pleasant

son, a child of delight to all eternity. Jer. xxxi. 20. —Well may we sing, therefore, with the poet,

> "When shall the time, dear Jesus, when
> The shining day appear,
> That we shall leave these clouds of sin,
> And guilt and darkness here."
>
> WATTS.

That we may be safely brought to that glorious inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is my earnest prayer.

"I am, my dear friend,

"Your's most affectionately,

"C. B."

No. V.

"17th Feb. 1792.

"Dear Friend—With great and unexpected pleasure I received your kind letter, and am happy to find that the Lord's work prospers in your hand. To be engaged in the service of Jesus, to be made instrumental in doing good in his cause, is indeed no small honour. It is true that the work which both you and I have set our hands to, is of the most arduous nature, and which no man can be sustained under, but by a divine power. We need as it were the wisdom of an angel to discuss the important topics held forth in God's sacred word; or rather, shall I say, we stand in need of the continual teach-

ings of the Eternal Spirit, lest we should be the unhappy instruments of distressing or deceiving the immortal souls of our fellow creatures. We must go forth, therefore, with an humble dependance on him, constantly imploring his gracious assistance, that we may be enabled to speak his word with all faithfulness and simplicity on the one hand, and all love and humility on the other. The time is short; it is incumbent on us to be diligent, to embrace every opportunity of doing good, for "blessed are they that sow beside all waters." Difficulties we must expect to meet with, but let us take care that they do not hinder our progress. I admire the conduct of the two apostles (see Acts, v. 41, 42.) who, though they were greatly opposed for the sake of their Master, yet they persevered in their work. We are told that they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name; and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. O zealous and honoured servants of the Most High God, may I and all the ministers of the everlasting gospel be blessed with such a fervent spirit, and never fail to recommend the boundless love and free grace of a dear Redeemer to dying mortals. I suppose you are acquainted with my present situation. Blessed be God, I find things comfortable, and can safely say, that while I am acquiring human literature, it is also the desire of my soul to be under the *guidance and tuition* of my gracious Lord, so that I may be more and more growing in the knowledge of divine things. But alas! I am a

dull scholar, and have made no proficiency in heavenly subjects as I ought. What pride, what self, what vanity still remains! O blessed Jesus, teach me to deny myself more, and follow thee in sincerity and truth.

But I must now conclude, though I would not forget to congratulate you on your usefulness in the Lord's vineyard. May you still be made more useful, and may the dear Redeemer keep you as the apple of his eye, and hide you under the shadow of his wings continually. Amen.

"I remain your's affectionately,

"C. B."

No. VI.

To Mr. C——, Petworth, Sussex.

"Hoxton, 18th April, 1792.

"My Dear C.—Your epistle I received on the 29th March last, and find you have been much employed since you left town. I hope it will tend to some great effect; even to the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints. If this be the case, you will then have to be thankful that Providence hath led you into that dark part of the country, and will be no small encouragement for you to proceed in the work. The opposition you have met with, I trust, will prove more beneficial than hurtful; inasmuch as it will excite you to fly to a throne of grace with greater earnestness. Be careful then for nothing; but

in every thing, by prayer and supplication, making your requests known unto God. And you know who hath said, 'I will never leave thee, no never forsake thee.'

"Nothing particular hath transpired respecting the circumstance of which we were talking before you left London. O for submission to the will of my heavenly Father; I know he will do all things well. I desire, therefore, to commit all my cares to him, to repose all my confidence in him, and ever to be directed by him; but yet I have much to mourn for, when I consider the perverseness, vanity, and depravity of my own volatile heart. This is my greatest perplexity. I perceive no growth in spiritual things; yea, often am led to conclude the contrary; so that I am ready to say,

"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus in his word?"

"Ah, my dear brother, when I reflect on the time that is past, it creates a kind of painful pleasure in my breast. With what delight did I fly with my friend to the ordinances of God, and what sweet communion did we enjoy; how animated the heart, how alive the affections, and how profitable the conversation! Can I forget these golden moments, these precious seasons? No, I cannot—they will ever live in my remembrance. But, however, I will not murmur, but endeavour to wait patiently at the feet of my gracious Saviour; and who knows but I may yet

dwell under his auspicious smiles, and rejoice in him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. O intreat him that I may be kept near to his blessed self, and at last join the celestial choir, in singing his praises for ever and ever.

" I remain, my dear Brother,

" Your's very affectionately,

" C. B."

No. VII.

" Wotton Under-edge, 7th July, 1792.

—— " With pleasure I sit down to perform my promise mentioned in my last. I think I am much better in health than when in town; the air is salubrious, and the country is pleasant. I hope, through the divine blessing, I shall increase in strength, so as to be able to work a little in my Master's vineyard. Every thing here bears a pleasing aspect; the fields are clothed in living green, the trees are loaded with fruit, the flowers send forth their sweet fragrance, and all nature seems to laugh and sing, while she declares the glory of him who is the great Author of all. Should not this, my dear friend, teach us some useful lesson? What an emblem is it of that sweet state we experience when the Sun of Righteousness arises in our minds; then the dark wintry clouds of unbelief and sorrow are removed, the sweet flowers (our graces) begin to revive and flourish, and our hearts are animated with the charming prospect of him who is altogether lovely

and the chief among ten thousand. O, sweet summer this! Let the ungodly, the worldling, rejoice in their vanities; we glory in realities. Our pleasures are not delusive, but permanent. To experience the light of the dear Redeemer's countenance shining upon our souls is heaven indeed. To know our sins are pardoned, to be assured of our interest in him. O what happiness! O blessed Jesus, let us ever dwell near to thee, and let our souls be continually satiated with thy loving-kindness. But perhaps my friend is mourning on account of the hardness of his heart, and lamenting that his faith is so little in exercise, and his love so languid. What advice can I give? What can I recommend better than to keep looking to Jesus. The reason of all our perplexities, doubts, and fears, arises from our being so lax in this duty. In proportion as we live and walk by faith, so will our comforts abound. When the eye is fixed upon any other object but Christ, what can we expect but that darkness and sorrow will ensue. O let us, therefore, remember the Psalmist, and endeavour to imitate him when he said, " My soul, wait thou upon God, for my expectation is from him." I have had an interview with the Rev. Mr. English, whom perhaps you have heard, as he preaches sometimes at Surry Chapel. He seems to be a spiritual man. It is pleasing to see ministers of the gospel appear as such when they are out of the pulpit, as well as when they are in. I wish there was more of this. Ministers too often forget themselves when they have done preaching, as if all their work consisted in *that;* whereas, it is their bu-

siness to preach privately as well as publicly. I love to see religion brought into the parlour; for surely it will be of no great effect, if it is to be confined to the church or meeting only. O, may God grant that I may never be ashamed to make him the subject matter of my conversation wherever I have the opportunity. Surely it cannot be unprofitable (and can it be *unpolite*) to discourse on his amazing compassion, boundless love, unspeakable condescension, and infinite goodness to sinful creatures? May he ever be my all in life, in death, and through eternity. I ask no more. Amen.

"I remain yours very affectionately,

"C. B."

No. VIII.

To his Sister.

"Wotton Under-edge, 11th July, 1792.

"With pleasure I inform you that I am much better than when in town. The country air is very conducive to my health, and I have had little or no return of the fever since I have been here. The day I was with you, I found myself much indisposed, and therefore very unfit for company. I hope your interview with —— was agreeable; I could expatiate in her praise, but must forbear at present till a better opportunity shall offer.

"I have been to ——, and find N— to be just the same. The place bears a gloomy aspect to me, and the recollection of former events only tends to

make it more so. I cannot help saying with Dr. Goldsmith, in his Deserted Village,

> "Here as with doubtful, pensive steps I range,
> Trace every scene, and wonder at the change,
> Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
> Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain."

"But, however, amidst all these changes and revolutions of a few years, yet the reflection of being preserved by an all-wise Providence from running into the vanities of the world, and made the happy recipient of divine grace, excites in my heart the warmest gratitude, and I hope, the most unreserved love to him who is the author of my existence, and of every comfort I enjoy. And now, my dear sister, call not this enthusiasm. I do not wish to touch upon that string, which in your ears may cause a jarring sound, or to give the least offence; but you must acknowledge, with me, that we never give a greater evidence of our rationality, than when we devote ourselves to that Supreme Being, whose only prerogative it is, to render us happy under all the vicissitudes of life, in the gloomy and awful hour of death, and when time shall be no more. Let us fly then, instantly fly to him, that we may escape his anger, and the curse of that law we have violated.

"Be not displeased,—you know that religion is my favourite topic, and having tasted somewhat of its sweetness, and experienced some of its blessings, I am anxious to bring you and others to a participation of the same. Indeed it is a branch of my

duty, and part of that sacred function in which I am employed; I wish therefore to fulfil my office, to be faithful, and ever to exercise that readiness of mind, in doing good to my fellow-mortals, which becomes a minister in so important and arduous a work. That you may be brought to know him, whom to know is life eternal, that he may ever bless you with the best of blessings, is the earnest desire and constant prayer of your affectionate brother, and willing servant,

"C. B."

No. IX.

To his Mother.

"Bristol, 28th July, 1792.

—— "Through a kind Providence, I arrived safe here last evening. I have been continually employed since I left town. I have preached at Wotton, Uley, Kingswood, Dursley, Hillsley, Upton, Horsley, Painswick, and Rodborough, where I have met with much hospitality, and found the people ready and attentive to hear the word. O that my feeble endeavours may be blessed by him in whose work I am employed, and whose servant I humbly hope I am. I desire to possess a greater spirit of philanthropy to my fellow-mortals, and to feel myself concerned for the good of their souls. And now, my dear mother, filial affection constrains me to wish you all happiness, and to implore the Divine Being that his blessing may attend you. Great has been

your care, and repeated your advice to me in years that are past. And shall a child now presume to instruct a parent? If it may be permitted then, my dear mother, let me exhort you to confide in, and live near to that God who hath been your preserver to the present moment. Need I say (to one who hath seen that all things here are vanity and vexation of spirit) that the highest enjoyment mortal creatures can experience, consists in communion with God. O let us earnestly supplicate him therefore to bless us with the light of his countenance, that we may be enabled to rejoice in him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let us beware of every worldly intrusion, and abstain from all appearance of evil, while we prove to those around us, by our consistency of conduct and general deportment, that we are born again of the Spirit, and are under his continual influence.

" In respect to my health, I trust I am better than when I left London, but I have often thought that the continual weakness and indisposition I am subject to will issue at last in a decline, and that London tends to accelerate my end. (*But what will not fancy carry one to.*) However, I never wish to forget its approach, but to keep it constantly in view; so that when it arrives I may be ready. O blessed period, when " I shall die to live, and live to die no more." Happy time, when I trust I shall be for ever exempt from pain, and released from all misery! O that, in that solemn hour, I may be enabled to exult and sing, " O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory." Now may

the Lord bless you, my dear mother, with his presence, and keep you by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation.

" I remain, your affectionate Son,

" C. B."

No. X.

" Bristol, 30th July, 1792.

—— " You have heard, I suppose, by my sister, that my health is in a manner re-established since I have been in the country. I hope I shall not meet with a relapse, though my body is much fatigued by incessant labour. I would wish to be reminded, by every pain I feel, of my mortality, and that the time will arrive when I must be brought to the house appointed for all living; for, alas! " what is health but a glimmering taper, that expires while it shines, and is liable to be extinguished by every motion of the air? What is strength but a tender blossom, that is often withered in its fullest bloom; often blasted even before it is blown?"* It is good therefore to keep our dissolution in view, while, with a spirit of faith and patience, we say, with holy Job, " All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." But may I ask how it is with you? Is your wonted health continued; and are you, above all things, growing in grace? Do you feel more love to the Saviour, and are you happily

* See Hervey's Consolation to the Afflicted.

constrained to take up your cross daily and follow him? Are you enabled to look with a holy contempt upon the vanities of the world, and so to pass *through* it, as not to be injured *by* it? If so, I congratulate you, and earnestly wish you still greater progress in the divine life. But perhaps you are ready to say, that though you see somewhat of the excellencies of Christ, discern the beauty of his gospel, believe the immutability of his perfections, and acknowledge the veracity of his word; yet you cannot live to his praise as you would, nor rejoice in him as you ought. It is probable some reasons may be assigned for this. Unbelief perhaps invades, the cares of the world intrude, or the enemy of souls distresses. These are barriers to our joy, are hindrances to our prosperity, and cause us to live at a distance from him we profess to love and serve. Should there not then be a peculiar and unremitted exertion of all the powers of our minds against them? Should there not be a constant exercise of prayer and watchfulness? Surely, if we wish to live happy, if we desire to rise superior to all the trifles of time and sense, ought we not to put on the whole armour of God? Eph. vi. If we long for an increase of happiness, there should be an increase of holiness, since they are inseparably connected. Let us then lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us, and run with alacrity and patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. O that God may sweetly constrain us to devote ourselves to him, that we may be the happy persons

who shall feel the influence of his Spirit; for, indeed, true religion, or the knowledge of him, is what one plainly but justly observes, "Not a name, but a nature; not a notion, but a motion." I now remain, yours sincerely, by the ties of nature and bond of affection,

"C. B."

No. XI.

"Bristol, 1st August, 1792.

My dear C——, Shall I thus address you, or shall my pen be dipped in the gall of displeasure, or be employed in the language of reproof? Had you not assigned a reason which I myself might have been swayed by, you neglect would have afforded some ground for correction. Punctuality in business, and accomplishment of promise, should ever be strictly attended to, if we wish to preserve our reputation and maintain uniformity of character.

"Providence has seen proper, these three or four years past, to place us at such a distance from each other, as to cause our interviews to be but seldom in comparison to what they were before; but my present feelings declare (and I think your last epistle speaks) the same inviolable attachment to subsist as ever. The consideration of this therefore excites me to forgive, though it would have added to my happiness had your silence been of shorter continuance.

"I presume, by the address on the back of your letter, that you had forgotten that the vacation was

commenced, and therefore expected I had been still in London. I have been from thence a month, and suppose I shall be three weeks longer before I return. I have the pleasure to inform you, that your ministry has been acceptable at Hope Chapel. I have been told, that it has not been so well attended since you left it. I do not mention this that you may be elated with vanity, but that you may be encouraged to proceed. I am no great votary for unmeaning adulation, or useless panegyric, as it must be fulsome to every person of refined, or even common sense; but I believe the information of success, of good being done to our fellow-mortals, must prove such welcome intelligence as to excite the warmest gratitude in the sincere heart and generous mind. Go on, therefore, my dear friend, with the sacred volume in your hand, with a spirit of philanthropy in your breast, the love of Christ on your tongue, and his glory alone in your eye, and usefulness must succeed.

"Social religion, as you observe, in the present day, is thought too precise. The reason is, perhaps, that the generality of those who ought to inculcate it in the pulpit, by their preaching, and in their lives, by their example, are men dispossessed of any concern for the welfare of mankind. Is it not lamentable, that many who have to address large and perhaps illiterate auditories, instead of speaking to their capacities and adapting themselves to their understandings, as it were, philosophize the truth, and render it impossible to be understood by the majority of the hearers; or, on the other hand, what

they deliver is done with such supineness, as if it were a matter of the smallest moment. As one observes, "Their discourses from the pulpit are generally dry, methodical, and unaffecting, delivered with the most insipid calmness; insomuch, that should the peaceful preacher lift up his head over the cushion, which alone he seems to address, he might discover his audience, instead of being awakened to remorse, actually sleeping over his methodical and laboured composition." *See Goldsmith's Essays.*

"I have been thinking, therefore, in order to facilitate usefulness, that there should be an address to the passions, as well as to the judgment, and that an extreme on both sides should be guarded against, lest we follow the example of some who are preaching all to the affections, and others all to the understanding. But divine direction is necessary; let us then supplicate the assistance of Him who spake as never man spake; and whose only prerogative it is to make us wise to win souls.

"I remain yours very affectionately,

"C. B."

No. XII.

"Bristol, 2d August, 1792.

——"The recollection of the great and repeated tokens of kindness received from you constrains me to take up my pen. Indeed it would be ingratitude in me were I not to acknowledge your invariable civility and attention, even from the first moment of our acquaintance. Happy friendship, that length of

time, nor distance of place, cannot dissolve! But what retaliation shall I make, or how shall I compensate my friends for the continual respect they manifest, but by assuring them that they shall not be forgotten at a throne of grace.

"I hope you both remain well. O what an invaluable blessing is health, and how much more prized by the deprivation of it! This I have learned by experience, since more than once have I been brought to the confines of the grave, when my surrounding friends have been ready to say, "The place that now knoweth him, will soon know him no more!" And often have I thought that my departure was at hand, but yet am I spared; though the weakness of my constitution still reminds me of my dissolution. I have been incessantly engaged in my Master's work since I left London, and, blessed be God, it has in some measure been rendered pleasant. O, to be an ambassador from God is the highest honour, and the most inestimable privilege a mortal creature can be favoured with! "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." Isaiah, lii. 7. The office truly is arduous, but we have One who is sufficient to strengthen and enable us to discharge it with zeal and faithfulness. Were I more dependant upon him, I think my usefulness would be more extensive; but, alas! I am too frequently found in a supine and careless state, my heart indifferent, my faith small, my tongue silent. I want to cleave

closer to him in private, that I may be more blessed in public; I wish to give up my all to God, that he may vouchsafe to give himself to me, for independent of his benign presence, and without his divine blessing, I can experience no happiness in myself, nor be the instrument of doing good to others. But, however, I trust you, my dear friends, are growing in grace, are flourishing plants in the garden of the Lord. Perhaps you are lamenting your state, unbelief and the world invade, and you are ready to give way to despondency; but remember you have one who is more potent than all, one who hath said, "I will be as a wall of fire round about you;" one who hath engaged to protect and will delight to bless you. When some foreign ambassadors came pretty early in the morning to have an audience with Alexander, they were told his majesty was not stirring; upon which they expressed some surprise, that a potentate who had so many and such momentous affairs to manage should sleep so long; the king hearing of their observation ordered them to be informed, 'that though he slept, Parmenio waked;' and though we sleep, though we forget, too often forget ourselves, and our adored Redeemer: He the great keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; never, never forgets either us or our interests.* Repair therefore to him, let him be the chief object of your affection. Strive to maintain a grateful, a continual sense of his love on your hearts. Do you wish to be happy? I know you do. Carry on

* Vide Hervey's Letters to Lady Shirley.

then a heavenly correspondence with him; intreat him that you may be kept from the intrusion of worldly cares, that your negociations here may not prevent your negociating for eternity. Let the blessed Jesus be ever in view, not only in the closet, but in the *dining room*, in the *shop*, in all, then shall prosperity attend your steps, and peace reside in your dwellings. Thus, my dear friends, suffer the word of exhortation, and may the ever glorious Redeemer be propitious to your souls, and bless you abundantly with the best of blessings, is the sincere petition of,

"Yours inviolably in the best bonds,

"C. B."

No. XIII.

"Bristol, 6th August, 1792.

—— "Happy am I in having the opportunity of proving that I have not forgotten you. Indeed the ties of friendship and dictates of affection would not have suffered me to have neglected writing. When I call to mind the many sweet hours we have spent in Christian converse, the happy seasons we have experienced at a throne of grace, and how often we have walked together to the house of God, and with rapture heard of the boundless compassion, the inimitable goodness, and unspeakable love of the dear Redeemer, it still endears *that friendship*, which I hope will continue till months and years revolve no more; yea, till that happy period, when we shall arrive in the realms of bliss; where I trust it shall subsist; never, never to be dissolved.

" Yesterday I was employed in executing my embassage to poor sinners. The number that attend are astonishing. Mr. —— was engaged in (what is very unfashionable, and disgusting to the world) preaching out of doors, and inviting the vilest to come and participate in the blessings of the everlasting gospel. O my dear friend, what welcome news is it, that the arms of Jesus are expanded, and that he is willing to save the most guilty! Is not this encouragement for us who have so long rebelled against him? Let us repair, therefore, to him, that our sins may be pardoned, our persons justified, and that we may at last reign with him for ever and ever.

" But perhaps my friend is mourning under a sense of his own corruptions, and complaining that Jesus is so little the object of his affections. Alas! Sir, this is too much the case with us all. Unbelief assaults, Satan opposes, sin allures, so that we are sometimes brought almost to the borders of despair! I confess for myself, that such is the unfavourable light I often view things in, that I am led to conclude that I am only born to be miserable, only known to be despised, and only live to rebel; but yet I dare not give it up, because, as I observed before, Jesus is able to save and willing to forgive the greatest sinners: O were not this the case, trembling and horror would seize my guilty soul! I must sit down and weep over my hopeless state, and expect nothing but vindictive justice to plunge me into the gulf of unutterable woe! But with him

there is mercy. O sweet word! on this my hope depends; on this I stake my all. But shall I sin against him because I know there is forgiveness? God forbid! If you had been the person who had kindly saved me from impending danger; if you had preserved me from some approaching dreadful catastrophe; if you had protected me from some direful calamity; if you had supported me in some heavy affliction; if you had sympathized with me in some pungent distress; would it not have been the deepest ingratitude, the greatest unkindness, to have discarded you for it, to have taken no notice, or to have employed my tongue in reproaching you? But O, how much more so, when I consider that Jesus hath plucked me as a brand from the burning; that he has protected me from the most imminent dangers; that he has preserved me from the greatest evils; and blessed me with so many unspeakable mercies! Can I then wilfully sin against so gracious a friend? O my soul, tremble at the thought, and fly, instantly fly, from the approach of that which is such an enemy to him, so injurious to myself. But whither am I going? I am writing of myself instead of writing to my friend. But perhaps his feelings are the same; if so, then let us unite in supplicating the throne of grace, that while, on the one hand, we rejoice in his mercy, yet on the other we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. But it is probable you, like myself, are complaining how much the world intrudes, how much it proves a barrier to your communion with God, and hinders your spiritual progress. It is true we cannot forbear

having something to do with it; but as one observes, "the mischief arises not from our living in the world; but the world living in us, occupying our hearts, and monopolizing our affections."* It requires peculiar supplies of grace to be enabled to pass through it, and not to be injured by it. However, let us not forget that we have one who can gain us the victory. O that he may ever dwell in your heart and mine by faith, and then we shall be more than conquerors. My paper forbids my enlarging, I must therefore conclude, wishing you the best of blessings in time and for ever.

"I remain your willing servant,

"and affectionate friend,

"C. B."

No. XIV.

"Bristol, 8th August, 1792.

——"The last letter I received from London, brought me the unwelcome intelligence of your being indisposed; but I hope this will find you much recovered. Alas! how precarious is health, how soon are our frail tabernacles disordered; how suddenly arrested by pain, how easily invaded by sickness. I cannot say I have reason to complain at present, though my animal frame is enervated, and my hand trembles while it writes; yet I would bless my God that it is, *as it is*. I find his voice in this, yea in all my afflictions to be "Arise and depart,

* Mrs. Hannah More's Manners of the Great.

for this is not your rest." Indeed we have need of perpetual monitors to remind us of the inconsistency of being too warmly attached to sublunary things, and to show us that "inordinate affection is the way to inordinate affliction." And have we not, my dear friend, ere now been ready to take up our abode here? Have we not imagined ourselves to be surrounded with delights, and thought that prosperity attended our steps; when lo! in the midst of all, we have no sooner endeavoured to pluck some sweet flower, but it hath withered in our hands; or some sharp thorn was hid behind, in order to create a pain with our pleasure? What then, shall not these grievous, and I may say repeated repulses teach us, that all on earth is shadow; shall it not induce us to write mutability on every object? Shall it not lead us to depend on him in whom is no variableness or shadow of turning? It is true wealth may be agreeable, abilities may be desirable, and friendship may be sweet; but yet if these are the *only* sources of our joy we shall be very far from obtaining real peace and permanent pleasure. And however fanatical it may appear to an unthinking world to implore the Supreme Being for true happiness, yet let such remember that he is the alone author of it, and without his Spirit it is impossible to find it.

"And cannot I congratulate my friend on *his* being sensible of this; and do not I see him imitating the Psalmist, and saying, "My soul wait thou upon God, for my expectation is only from him." Yes, I trust he knows whose smile it is that makes a heaven; whose frown it is that creates a hell! To exhort you,

therefore, would be needless, but to rejoice with you is my privilege.

"I find that great man of God, Mr. Ryland, is gone home. I cannot say, but that I experienced some emotions of sorrow when I heard it, because I respected him as a man of grace as well as intellect. Where was the man that possessed such a capacious understanding; such a rich genius, such unaccountable fire and zeal, and a soul filled with the noblest ideas of God; with such hatred to sin, with such love to holiness, with such unbounded desire to promote the glory of Christ? Though his body was debilitated, and he for some months rendered incapable of attending to public duty, yet I never was in his company, but I was sure to find something profitable; yea, what he has said I believe, will not be easily erased from my mind, while I am this side of the grave. But he is gone, and that to dwell with Him whom he ardently loved, and now incessantly adores. O let us be anticipating the happy time when *we also* shall be called away, to enter into that rest which remains for the people of God.

"I now subscribe myself,

"Your willing servant,

"C. B."

No. XV.

"Bristol, 9th August, 1792.

"—— With inexpressible pleasure your kind epistle came to hand. What joy does it afford me to

hear from those to whom I am attached; but it is an additional satisfaction when I consider that a few days will make a personal interview practicable. And here let me not be accused of enthusiasm, if I endeavour to improve the thought, by observing, how welcome that period, how glorious that hour, when we poor pilgrims shall be called from exile home to meet the Friend of Sinners, the Beloved of our Souls! When the blissful sentence shall be pronounced, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" O what transport will fill our hearts; what songs of praise will dwell on our lips; what flames of love shall be kindled in our souls, never, no never to be extinguished, throughout the countless ages of eternity! Eternity, did I say? Astonishing word! I am lost in reflection!—As one observes,* "Mysterious, mighty existence! A sum not to be lessened by the largest deductions; an extent not to be contracted by all possible diminutions! None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages, so much of eternity is gone. For when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing, and when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending! Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of spring, increased by the herbage of summer; both augmented by the leaves of autumn, and all multiplied by the drops of rain which drown the winter; when these, and ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by

* Mr. Hervey.

any similitude, or imagined by any conception: when all these are revolved and finished, eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will only be beginning!" And what! shall we spend this eternity with the adorable Jesus? Shall we be the happy persons to reign for ever with him? Yes, I trust *we*, even *we*, who have rebelled against him, we who have violated his law, shall, through divine mercy and free grace, be brought to the realms of glory above. O delightful idea! Let us indulge the thought; let us encourage the meditation; let us step aside from the busy world, and invite the pleasing reflection; let us endeavour to draw back the curtain, and with an eye of faith look into eternity; let us humbly penetrate, let us joyfully behold those heavenly mansions, while we incessantly adore and thankfully admire the benign and boundless love of the great Jehovah as the result of all. But yet, after all, how dark our perceptions, how clouded our views of the celestial state. Mortality must be resigned, and our souls must be brought into the possession before we can have a clear and full discovery of its blessedness. Yea, who can tell but that our bliss may be increasing for ever. O what a reviving cordial is this for our dejected minds! Blessed anticipation, come thou and dwell with us, reside in our breasts, and live in all the trials and vicissitudes attending us here, until the time arrive when we shall experience the real enjoyment, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. Adorable Redeemer, prepare us for this happy

change, that our constant language may be, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen."

"I now remain, my dear,

"Yours very affectionately for ever.

"C. B."

No. XVI.

"Hoxton, December 10th, 1792.

"My dear C——, The unwelcome news, I suppose, hath not reached your ear. Our old friend and acquaintance, C——e, on Sabbath-day week, broke his thigh by a fall; and on Friday morning entered (I humbly hope) into his eternal rest? This sudden and unexpected event hath no small effect upon our minds. Indeed, for myself, I cannot bear to reflect on it, for busy memory calls up a multitude of past instances, wherein it must be said he showed great kindness. I imagine to myself I see him, hear him, and am conversing with him as in former time; but, alas! he is gone, and the place that once knew him shall know him no more!

"I am conscious, my brother, you feel with us, and though of late you have not had the opportunity of being much with him, yet you cannot but recollect those hours when you joined in Christian converse with him, those seasons when you walked to the house of the Lord together, and were closely united by the bonds of brotherly love. These, and many other circumstances, no doubt strike your mind, while you are ready to say, "I am distressed

for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been to me, thy love to me was wonderful." But, my dear brother, let us not sorrow as those without hope; let us endeavour to improve this bereaving dispensation; let it remind us of our short continuance here, and that we must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. We know not how soon the slender thread of our lives may be cut: Our friend is taken away in the prime of life: Death's arrow may soon be pointed at us: some direful accident, some raging fever, may soon bring us to the house appointed for all living. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not." But blessed be God, cannot we sing,

"Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
Soft is the passage through the shade,
And all the prospect fair." WATTS.

Happy will it be for us, in that awful moment, to be interested in the love of a gracious Saviour; then shall we be enabled to go off as victorious conquerors, and not as vanquished enemies. But while our lives are spared, let us redeem the time. O Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

"I am, my dear brother,
"Your's very affectionately,
"C. B."

Before I introduce any portions of Mr. Buck's correspondence and diary, commencing with the year 1793, the following extract, with which he begins his memoirs of that period, is too valuable not to be inserted in this its proper place.

" The month of January, 1793, brings us the intelligence of the death of the celebrated Rev. John Berridge of Everton. He was a popular but quaint preacher; certainly possessing some degree of originality. He was no mean scholar; but entered the ministry with very dark and cloudy views of divine truth, and for some time remained in this state, producing no salutary effects on his auditory; but being through divine influence brought at last to a clear view of gospel sentiments, and feeling their power on his heart, he altered his mode of preaching, and in a little time it is surprising how useful he became. It is said, that in the first year he was visited by a thousand different persons under serious impressions; and it has been computed, that under his own and the joint ministry of Mr. Hicks, about four thousand were awakened to a concern for their souls in about the space of twelve months. I record this here, that any who read these pages, and are looking forward to the sacred work, may remember two things; first, that usefulness should be the supreme object a minister should ever keep in view; knowledge is not to be despised, literary attainments are not to be neglected, the cultivation of talents or gifts not to be thought lightly of; but I say usefulness, usefulness, should be the design, and every

study, every plan, every exertion, every address, should all be rendered subservient to this. And then, in the second place, remember, that as usefulness is the great object, so the only way to facilitate and promote this, is to preach Christ Jesus and him crucified, and exhibiting him to miserable men, in the wisdom of his designs, the eternity of his love, the merit of his work, the freeness of his grace, the beauty of his doctrines, the abundance of his promises, in the loveliness of his spirit, and the excellency of his example. O ye candidates for the sacred work, if ye long to do good, to be wise, to win souls, to behold success in your ministry, ever recollect that this is the only way. Dare not to go forth unless this be your determination; rather retire, and hide yourselves in the shades of obscurity, if you do not intend to display the glories of the cross. For it is this that gives dignity to our every service, that constitutes the splendour and excellency of every sermon, and this only which will be effectual in rescuing immortal beings from the paths of misery and destruction. I would rather be John Berridge, with my spiritual children around me, than the greatest monarch, poet, hero, or philosopher in the world, who never had the honour, and who perhaps never made the attempt to convert one soul to the true God.

" I have been now speaking of usefulness, and that more especially as it regards the best part of man; but let it not be understood that I think nothing of sympathy, of charity to the body, of liberality to the poor, of the common principles of educa-

tion, of ameliorating the temporal calamities of mankind. Far from it. I was delighted this year in having an opportunity of visiting St. Paul's cathedral, at the general assembly of all the charity-children in the different parishes in London, amounting to several thousands. It is truly a grand sight. Their different dress, by which they are distinguished; their admirable position, one above another, and their vast number, form such a *coup d'œil*, that is not easily to be found elsewhere. So many infant voices too, all united, so clear yet so harmonious, singing hallelujah, and ascribing universal praise to the Most High, thrilled through the soul,* and produced so powerful an effect, that some have been scarcely able to bear it. But, above all, the charming thought, that all these are the children of British benevolence, a benevolence which not only clothes their bodies, so that they may well say, "I was naked and ye clothed me," but which takes them by the hand, and leads them to the abodes of instruction, and, on sabbath-days, to the temple of God. Yet these, after all, form but a part, in this vast metropolis, of those who, in different communities, are under instruction. What may we not expect from the various institutions of this kind, if due care be taken, but that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge be increased."

* An old musician took his station just by me; when the children struck up the 100th Psalm, he was so overwhelmed that he could scarcely sit, and exclaimed, "Now my hair begins to stand on end."

Early in this year, Mr. Buck visited Walsall, and preached there during several sabbaths; he also made excursions into most of the adjacent towns and villages, on one errand—to recommend to the attention of his hearers the glorious Redeemer; determining not to know any thing among men, but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." On his return from this extensive and laborious tour, he devoted himself to the studies of the academy, and prepared for a public examination in Greek and Hebrew, through which he passed with honour. He also delivered a theological address before his tutors, fellow-students, and various ministers. This he describes as a severe trial, but observes, that "he got through better than he expected." In this part of his narrative, he thus notices the death of an eminent minister of Christ.

"I had not returned long, before I was informed of the death of the Rev. Nathaniel Trotman, of White Row, London. The day he died he enjoyed an unusual degree of composure, and spent part of the evening in spiritual conversation with a friend. Soon after, he ordered his servant to bring the Bible, and then get his supper. On his return, about twenty minutes after, he found Mr. T. dead on the floor, having expired, it is supposed, in the act of prayer. Thus, "blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." Though not a man of extraordinary genius, yet, in some respects, he was a model for young preachers. In the pulpit, his action was just, equally remote from

theatric affectation and the insipid formality of indifference. His subjects were purely evangelical. In his preaching, there was the light of doctrine without the dryness of system; the warmth of experience without the wild fire of enthusiasm; the necessity of morality without the ostentation of pharisaism. His divisions were natural, his inferences just, and his applications by far the most animated parts of his discourses. His language was plain, but not vulgar; his address was affectionate, but not fulsome; faithful, but not acrimonious. By maintaining an agreeable mixture of each, he preserved a dignity worthy of the Lord's ambassador, and a tenderness altogether becoming the fellow Christian. It is pleasant also, when the ministers of divine truth have been preserved to the close of their work in a state of true devotedness to God, so as to leave such a character behind them as shall prove a perpetual sermon to those who reflect on it. A pious divine, who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance five-and-thirty years, thus spake of him; "Were I to sum up all in a few words, and speak my real sentiments of him, it should be, that he was a Nathaniel for uprightness and sincerity, a Moses for meekness, a Job for patience, a Josiah for piety, a David for humility, a Jeremiah for lamentation over poor sinners, and a Paul for zeal for the glory of God." May such lovely characters be found in every age."

Mr. Buck records, with heartfelt pleasure, an instance of his successful preaching, which came to his knowledge about this time.

" I had reason," he observes, " to be thankful for encouragement in several instances, as well as for reproof. This very day I received the following note:—

" Reverend Sir—Please to excuse the liberty I have taken, in troubling you with these few lines. You may say you have the honour of calling a sinner from the brink of hell. The first time I came to Silver Street Chapel, I had the pleasure of hearing you, and ever since, I have embraced all opportunities. When I hear you preach, it makes me say, What a sinner I am. I remain, your humble servant,

" H. C."

" And is not this the tendency of a preached gospel? That sermon which makes a man satisfied with himself, which increases his dependence on his works, and which leads not the mind to humbling views, under a sense of depraved nature, is neither according to truth, nor will it ever effect any good. No, it is the gospel, faithfully preached, that will lead a man like the person mentioned above, to exclaim, " What a sinner I am." And when the conscience is thus convinced, O how delightful do the tidings of mercy appear. Then the cross shines in all its glory, and the mind, however agitated before, reposes under it with unspeakable joy."

Mr. Buck's next visit was to Farnham, in Surry, of which, and the circumstances which led to it, he gives the following account:

" The Rev. Mr. Gunn having been lately ejected from his curacy at Farnham, on account of his faith-

ful preaching, multitudes of his hearers, among whom there had been a great work, went off with him, and were determined, if they could not hear the gospel in the church, that they would hear it elsewhere. They therefore, by their own contributions, and by the liberality of the religious public, built a very neat and commodious place. It was opened by the Rev. Messrs. Wilks, Ford, and Eyre. I was fixed upon to be the first supply. I went for three Sabbaths. The place was well attended, and the prospect very pleasing. Lodging in the same house with the Rev. Mr. Gunn, we formed an acquaintance and friendship which continued till the day of his death; and though he was a very strong Churchman, he would sometimes come to hear me, not only at Farnham, but many years afterwards at my place of worship in London.* While at Farnham, I was requested to go and preach at a dark village, called Crondel, about three miles distant. Others said it would be dangerous, as they threatened to burn any person who should make the attempt. I went, however, and preached without much opposition, except a little noise, particularly from a blacksmith, who hammered as hard as he could on one anvil, while I worked as hard as I could on an-

* Mr. Gunn was not like Mr. Whitefield; he paid very little attention to his dress and external appearance, but in the pulpit, his sharp piercing eye, his powerful addresses to the conscience, his peculiar, pointed manner, and his energetic and faithful declaration of the truth, gained the attention in such an astonishing manner, that he soon became very popular. Great numbers were awakened, especially young people, many of whom have joined other churches, in the establishment and out of it.

other of a different kind. I was told afterwards, that he threw down his hammer, and went away for fear of being converted. I went a second time, and preached in a room; before I began, a man knocked at the door about some business, who had heard me when I was there before. The owner of the house asked him to come in and hear the minister who preached the other day. O no, that he would not, he said, for what business had he to concern himself about him, and point him out before all the congregation, (for I remember I had pointed with my finger, and said, *that* drunkard, *that* sabbath-breaker, *that* swearer, &c.) and nothing could persuade the man but that I meant him, though he was assured by the owner of the house that I had never known him, nor any thing of him. Thus we see how conscience sometimes operates, and that the word of God is like a sharp two-edged sword. Preaching has been continued since, more or less, in this place, and now they have a place of worship erected.

"I visited Farnham again, at the close of the year, for three Sabbaths,* and received an invitation to settle among them, as it was also the wish of Mr. Gunn; but there being a few things which appeared to me as objections, and not having finish-

* The people of the town showed much enmity, and marked the hearers as they walked along, by saying, "That's he, that's he." Mr. Wildbore, jun. and myself happening to be there on Christmas-day, they got hold of our names, and talked of a hunt, but they wished to know which would be turned out, the buck or the boar.

ed my studies, I declined, and returned to Hoxton."

A few letters from Mr. Buck's correspondence will close the account of this year.

No. XVII.

"Walsall, Staffordshire, 24th June, 1793.

——"I embrace the first opportunity of sitting down to write to my dear friend, who will not, I am conscious, be reluctant to hear of my welfare. Yesterday I preached three times at the chapel here, and hope some received comfort through the blessing of God. It is a neat place, and computed to hold about a thousand persons, but it was not full. The singing pleases me much. The voices of some of the singers are so clear and charming, that they remind me of that happy period, when, I humbly hope, I shall hear celestial music above. This is a thought I wish to indulge, and would consider every thing as beneficial that has a tendency to lead my meditations thither. What can be more pleasing to the weary traveller, than the anticipation of his desired rest, and what can yield the true Christian more happiness, than to look forward to those climes of undisturbed and everlasting felicity in the world to come? Will you not join with me, my dear friend, in the delightful contemplation of that blessed abode? Come, let us soar together above the transitory things of this vain world, and press towards the heavenly gate. Let our affections be there, and we shall

find it the means of supporting us under the various trials attendant on this mortal life. Happy would it be for us, if our hearts were more in heaven, then should we possess more of heaven in our hearts.

"It is impossible to live without meeting with continual troubles, but how would they be sweetened, and how little should we complain under them, had we but a greater sense of that joy which is to come. O let us recollect the pleasing time, when the storm of life shall cease, the gloomy clouds disperse, and eternal day break in upon our view; when a glory more refulgent than ten thousand suns surround us, and we, with myriads of angelic hosts, celebrate the praises, and adore the unspeakable goodness of the great Jehovah. And will this be our employ? Will this be the delightful work in which we shall be for ever engaged? Let us no more then indulge the murmuring thought, sit pensive at the approach of expected trouble, or sink under the unwelcome hand of adversity. The few fleeting moments allotted us here will soon be gone, and we shall be brought into the enjoyment of that rest which remains for the people of God; "all the days of our appointed time therefore let us wait, till our change come." In the mean time, let us strive to get nearer to God, to know more of him, depend more upon him, do more for him, rejoice more in him, and live more to him. It is our privilege to be always looking up for his direction, and supplicating his grace; and, blessed be his name, he will communicate to us every needful supply while we are

in the way. If he has prepared a heaven for us, he will prepare us for heaven; yea, he will make all our crosses, and all our trials, subservient thereto. Every stumbling-block shall be removed, every enemy conquered, and every difficulty be useful. He is a safe guide, and a sure protection; by night and by day he will exercise his tender regard toward us, and though he may suffer us to be opposed, deserted, and tempted by the world, yet he will lead us by his counsel here, and at last bring us to glory. Let it be our aim, therefore, to keep up communion with him, for in the light of his countenance is life, and his favour is as the cloud of the latter rain. If we wish to have heaven upon earth, and to be happy in a miserable world, the only way is to implore his grace, to rely upon his word, and to live in obedience to his divine command.

"I remain, my dear friend,

"Your's very affectionately,

"C. B."

No. XVIII.

"Walsall, 25th June, 1793.

"Dear Sister—Be assured it is with pleasure I take up my pen to write to you a few lines. I arrived safe here on Friday last through a kind Providence, and hope the air will be serviceable to my health.

"The country is very pleasant, and all nature seems to be alive. The fruitful plains, the verdant lawns, and towering hills, have a delightful appear-

ance, while the little choristers of the air, swell their notes, and afford me music harmonious to the ear. Here, retired from the busy world, I can contemplate the wonderful works of creation, and behold infinite wisdom displayed in every object around. Here, in the calm retreat, in the silent shade, the mind may pursue the happy employ without interruption, and learn the most useful lessons and the most salutary instructions. How happy the man, who, tired of the glittering toys and insipid pleasures of this world, covets retirement, in order that he may be wise, that he may turn his mind to more noble objects, converse with God, and look beyond the changing scenes of this mortal life. But how very few are there who can look with indifference upon all terrene things, who can set their feet, as it were, upon the globe, and aspire to those joys which are celestial; how great the number who are lost in dissipation, whose minds are enveloped in ignorance, and whose dispositions are vicious to the greatest degree. Surely man was never formed thus to debase his nature; his rational faculties were never given him to be thus abused, but, on the contrary, that he might devote himself to the pursuit of that Object to whom he is under unspeakable obligations, and without the knowledge of whom he can never obtain true felicity. The dictates of reason, as well as the scripture, inform us that it is man's highest privilege, as well as indispensable duty, to live in continual obedience to God, in whom we live, move, and have our being; but many imagine, that in so doing they must relinquish all their

happiness, that it will tend to make them gloomy, and unfit them for society; but what pleasure so great as that which is experienced in the knowledge of God? what peace so permanent as that which is the result of being acquainted with him? what honour so desirable as that which the King of kings confers on all his willing and obedient subjects? what reward so glorious and lasting as that which will be given to all those that love him? Let us for ever therefore, consider religion as the only source of true satisfaction, and never rest contented but when we are under its influence. Well for us if we can say with the poet, when speaking of religion, and the Author of it,

> " Thou, my all,
> My theme, my inspiration, and my crown;
> My strength in age, my rise in low estate,
> My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth; my world,
> My boast through time, bliss through eternity."
>
> YOUNG.

Noble declarations these; may we be blessed with such principles, and may the God of heaven and earth be the delight of our hearts, and the theme of our song for ever. I must now conclude, only wishing you, with myself, to be interested in his love, who only can make us happy.

" I remain your affectionate Brother,

" C. B."

No. XIX.

Rev. Mr. Wills, Islington.

"Walsall, 26th June, 1793.

"My dear Sir,—Through mercy I arrived safe at my journey's end, and have reason to be thankful for it, as we were exposed to some little danger by the way. The coachman, about three o'clock in the morning, being as we supposed, intoxicated, fell asleep, and was thrown from the coach-box; they said he pitched upon his head, and was very near being under the wheel. He was some time before he recovered, and appeared to be much hurt; providentially there was a postillion, or we might have been overturned. We had a fresh coachman in about another mile, who was a sober man and drove with care. I found myself rather uncomfortable for the first two or three days, being a stranger to all the people. They have here one of the neatest chapels I ever saw, said to contain upwards of a thousand persons; but it is not full, though there is a prospect of an increase, had they but a minister they approved of. They have preaching three times on a sabbath, and once in the week, but I should like it better, were it twice on the sabbath, and twice in the week, as it would better suit my constitution; however I hope my feeble endeavours will be rendered successful among them; then shall I have reason to be grateful, and find something to encourage me in the important work. I am often dejected, because I think I am not useful in my Master's service; but yet

I know not how to relinquish the work, though I have many times thought of doing it. My opportunities of preaching while at the academy, have not, I trust, been a little serviceable in keeping up a liveliness as to spiritual things. Human literature, though useful, yet how many lose a sense of divine things in the acquisition of it; and what is a student, what is a minister, without this? Methinks the world is a wilderness without communion with God, and every thing must bear a gloomy aspect, if the Sun of Righteousness doth not shed his genial influences upon us. O that I could find more of his love shed abroad in my heart; but, alas! my corruptions rise, and intervene between God and my soul, and prevent my rejoicing in him, as I wish to do. I find nothing satisfactory but the light of his countenance. Liberty is dear, friends are blessings, temporal mercies desirable, but what are these without my God? If he do not smile, all is darkness, all distress; my pleasure is turned into pain, my day into night, my temple songs into bitter lamentations. Whither can I go, and how shall I obtain relief for my immortal soul? But if he be pleased to remove the vail, to break in upon the mind; O, how sweet the moments, how happy the hours, how pleasant the time glides along! Then afflictions appear as favours, adverse dispensations as friends, and every trial as sent in love. May you, dear Sir, be favoured with his blessing, be still more useful in his cause, and at last be brought to the enjoyment of him in glory, is the earnest prayer of your unworthy, but willing servant, "C. B."

No XX.

Rev. Mr. Wills, Islington.

" Walsall, 22d July, 1793.

" My dear Sir,—I consider myself much honoured in the receipt, and was peculiarly gratified in the perusal, of your kind letter, wherein you encourage me to go forward, by pointing me to the great Head of the Church, from whom all strength is to be derived. Indeed, I find I can do nothing without him; he is the fountain of all true felicity, and the only source of help. And as you observe, the more we know of him, the more humble, the more faithful we shall be as ministers of the gospel. It is an unspeakable blessing while we preach him to others, to experience the power of his grace in ourselves: will not, dear sir, the sweet communications of his love and spirit, make the most experimental and useful preachers, as well as humble and happy Christians? Surely to be favoured with his presence, to be under his influence, and to be able constantly to live near to him, must constitute a kind of heaven upon earth. Ah! could I but dwell under his smiles; could I but taste more of his love, my heart would not be so unaffected, my mind would not be so barren, my steps would not be so slow, my corruptions would not be so prevalent. But, alas! though I preach of this dear Redeemer, yet how little do I know and feel. O that he were more the object of my affections, the topic of my conversation, the joy of my heart. Sure I am, we cannot love him too much here, we cannot go in-

to an extreme. Our attachment to the world, to the creature, to self, may be excessive; but here our hearts cannot be too closely fixed, here the noble affection cannot be indulged too much. Happy the man that can say, 'whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee; *thou* art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' May I be blessed with such a disposition, and enjoy such an experience, and I want no more.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Ever your's most affectionately,

"C. B."

No. XXI.

"Walsall, 24th July, 1793.

"Ought you not to suffer some degree of punishment, for delaying to answer my last. How wishfully did I look for a letter before it came. I began to be uneasy, not knowing but something was the matter, till I heard from Mr. Cureton, who assured me you were well. However your's came to hand, the perusal of which gave me pleasure, especially as it showed me that Eliza has a capacity, to use her pen profitably, when she has a will. I have had a pleasing epistle from Mr. W——, and one from my old friend C——, which you shall see when an interview is practicable, but will you be angry if I tell you, I expect to stay a week or two longer than I first engaged for? I mean to go into Gloucestershire, if I can, before I come to London; but have three sabbaths yet to stay here. The Lord

has wonderfully strengthened me for the work while here; but yet I do not know that ever I wished to see my London friends so much as now. How it will be, if in time to come, I should be called to settle at a distance from them, I cannot tell, but wish to be resigned to my heavenly Father's pleasure, and to know no will but his. Ah, it is well, when we can leave all to his care, and trust him with every concern. Happy would it be for us, had we but more faith; then would there be more submission, more contentment, and under all the dispensations of providence, we should be able to say, "It is well." But blessed be God, whatever are our frames, and however we may complain that we cannot live so near to him, and depend so much upon him as we ought, yet he will still carry on his work. He will not leave us, though we have such a propensity to leave him, but will perfect that which concerns us. His promises are numerous, his arm is strong on our behalf; let us then hope in him. Afflictions and trials we must bear; but they shall be profitable, though not pleasant. Hence saith the apostle, 'though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' And we are not to think our afflictions come at random; they are not sent to be useless. I have no doubt but what every believer hath his particular cross assigned him, and the Lord knows how long he is to be under the rod; we must not conclude that every thing is left to mere chance, but rather ordered and

directed by an all-wise God, for the good of his people. Let the consideration of this, therefore, cheer our hearts in the midst of our difficulties, and teach us to commit our way unto the Lord; 'trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.' May you be under his care, kept by his power, and comforted by his spirit, is the sincere prayer of,

"Your's most affectionately,

"C. B."

No. XXII.

"Walsall, August 1, 1793.

"My dear Friend—You are, I hope, well in every respect; not only healthy in body, but prospering in soul. It is well when surrounded with so many privileges, and favoured with so many mercies, if the mind is kept fixed upon the right object, and we humbly lying at the feet of our dear Redeemer. We too often serve the Lord in a customary, formal manner, and our hearts are unaffected in that employment, which is so noble, and those exercises, which are so honourable and delightful. Ah! have we not reason to complain of our barrenness, and to mourn over the depravity and insensibility of our hearts; and though we profess to love the Lord above all earthly joy, yet how cold, how lukewarm are we frequently found! Are we not empty vines, bringing forth fruit unto ourselves? Hosea x. 1. What darkness upon the mind; what indifference about the best things: however, let us not despair. If the Lord had meant to have destroyed

us, (Judges xiii. 23.) surely we should not have felt our deadness; sin would not have been such a burden; we should not mourn so much in the absence of our God. We must not, therefore, give up, but though faint, yet pursue; though weak, yet proceed. The way is dark, but God is our light; it is difficult, but he is our strength; it is dangerous, but he is our safe-guard. Let us then supplicate for more faith to believe in and depend upon him. It is for want of this we are so weary: hence, says one,

> "True, 'tis a straight and thorny road,
> And mortal spirits tire and faint;
> But they forget the mighty God
> That feeds the strength of every saint."
>
> WATTS.

Let us go, therefore, with humble boldness, unto "the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need." He is willing to hear, if we are willing to pray. If we wish to conquer our enemies, and to go on comfortably, it must be by carrying on correspondence with God: he that is most in prayer will be least in danger, and continual supplication is the way to receive incessant consolation: God will regard those that apply to him; they may wait, but it shall not be in vain. Ten thousand thanks be to his dear name; he never yet disappointed the soul that looked to him for support and comfort, neither will he ever forget the people of his choice, the purchase of his blood, the joy of his heart, and the object of his love. O! let us take courage, and again look toward his holy

temple. Vile, wretched, and miserable as we are, he has promised to look upon, and be gracious unto us. That you may be blessed with the light of his countenance, and be favoured with the influences of his spirit, is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of your unworthy, but willing servant,

"C. B."

No. XXIII.

"Walsall, 9th August, 1793.

"—— I cannot help thinking how pleasant it is to hear from those we love, and how grateful we should be, that we have the means of communicating our thoughts to each other, though at a distance. How kind in Providence, thus to accommodate us, and enable us by the art of writing to make known our feelings, and to converse with each other while our persons are separated. This is kindness perhaps which many overlook, and ascribe all to the ingenuity of man, instead of adoring that all-wise God, without whose direction nothing can be done. However, let me be thankful to him for such a blessing. You send me the happy intelligence of the Lord's gracious manifestations to your soul. Blissful periods are those, when he shines upon and reveals himself to us. When under his smiles, what satisfaction we enjoy: how permanent the peace, how unspeakable the joy: and indeed what are all terrestrial things without it? Nothing, you know, is adequate to our desires, or sufficient for our happiness, when deprived of his divine presence. No.—

The most extensive kingdoms, the brightest gems, nor all the fair beauties of creation, nor ten thousand worlds at command, could for a moment produce the joy we want, or alleviate the pain we feel, when he withdraws. Blessed God! Be thou therefore near unto us, and never let the corruptions of our hearts, or the vanities of our conduct, cause thee to withhold what we count our joy, our life, our heaven, our all.

"I have lately been reading the "Christian Character exemplified, from the papers of Mrs. Margaret Magdalen A——s," which I think you have in your library. Never did I peruse any thing with more pleasure. Tears flowed from my eyes whilst I read. The descriptions of the affection she bore to her husband, tenderness to her children, loss of her brother, and patience in affliction, are truly pathetic, while her tenderness of conscience, and desire of living to the glory of her dear Lord, are manifest in every page. I think it excels most publications of the kind—such elevation of thought, and yet such simplicity, that it cannot fail of engaging the attention. The letter to a friend on the marriage state, is truly admirable, and ought to be read by all that enter into that state, or at least by every female who would wish to enjoy and augment connubial happiness.

"I cannot imagine who brought you the false information of my indisposition. Thanks be to my kind and heavenly Father, my health is nearly the same as when I left London. I have great reason to be grateful for the preservation and protection, love

and goodness, manifested unto me. O help me to praise him, and above all, do not forget to pray for one who is not unmindful of you at a throne of grace.

"I remain, your's sincerely,

"C. B."

No. XXIV.

Rev. Mr. Wills, Islington.

"Walsall, 10th August, 1793.

"My dear Sir—Your last gives me the unpleasing intelligence of your indisposition. I hope by this time you are perfectly recovered, and able to resume your delightful work of preaching the everlasting gospel to poor sinners. I know every intermission of this kind is painful to you, as it is your earnest desire incessantly to be employed in your Master's service; but you are not insensible of the wisdom and kindness of him who sometimes afflicts the body for the profit of the mind. It would be presumptuous for me, a young beginner, to say any thing on this head, to one who has been so long a faithful labourer, and whose experience is so far superior; yet I cannot help observing the old and golden truth, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose; while I add my prayer that your animal frame may be reinvigorated, your days lengthened, and your usefulness still more extensive. I am astonished at the account you give me of Mr. S——.

Surely he had forgotten himself, or rather his Master, whose love he had then an opportunity of declaring on so divine a subject. How he could treat of salvation without considering the author of it I know not; indeed you might well say, "Alas, my brother!" for how grievous is it to find those who pretend to discuss gospel topics, neglect the foundation, yea, the very foundation on which we place our happiness, our safety, our all. Take away this, we are undone, our hope is cut off, and nothing but despair, endless despair must ensue. Well, therefore, may every faithful minister say, "Let my right hand forget her cunning when I forget thee, O my Saviour." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And as there is no salvation but through him, certainly he should be the boast of our tongues, and the joy of our hearts. We cannot repeat his love in too fervent a manner; we cannot be too strenuous in defending his cause; we cannot be too diligent in recommending his goodness, setting forth his excellencies, and declaring his ability and willingness to receive the vilest sinners. O! that his glory may ever be in my view, his Spirit teaching my heart, his word influencing my conduct; yea, may he be my all in all. All in my conversation, my preaching, my life, my death.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your willing and obedient servant,

"C. B."

No. XXV.

" Farnham, Surrey, 18th October, 1793.

" The chapel was opened on Wednesday, and we had a large company, and an agreeable day. The place is very neat, and perhaps will contain seven hundred persons when crowded. They have set out on the methodist plan, of having prayers read, which they think will draw many of the thoughtless people of the town; but it is a question with me, whether they will not look with as much contempt upon a methodist chapel as upon a dissenting meeting. I have told them my thoughts on the business. However, I rejoice that here is a house erected for the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and I hope many souls will have reason to bless God for it to all eternity. Yesterday I opened my commission in this country. I preached out of doors at a place called Crondal, three miles from hence. We all expected to meet with much opposition, and some were faint-hearted about it, as such a thing was so uncommon in that place. However, we went, and a good congregation we had. The devil wanted to disturb us, but he was chained, and we got through without much opposition. Who can tell but that some poor soul may be led to think about the best things, and be brought to a saving knowledge of the truth! People may say what they please against this mode of preaching, but I am confident it is the way to do much good. Most ministers of the establishment, and many among the dissenters, are no great advocates for it; but such, methinks, prove

themselves to be more fearful than zealous. Souls are immortal, and precious; time is short and fleeting. It becomes us therefore to use every mean for the promotion of the gospel, and the welfare of never-dying souls. I must say, that I think the methodist ministers are most praiseworthy in this respect, though many of them are more warm than wise. They give up their good names, their reputation among men; they deny themselves, they mortify their feelings, and go forth boldly into the highways and hedges, and compel poor sinners to come in. Noble characters! Valuable men! Of more worth than the wisest politicians, profoundest philosophers, or ablest warriors that ever existed. O! that I had a warmer heart, a wiser head, a more powerful voice, then methinks I should like to go through the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*

* The following observations of Lord Byron will rescue this method of teaching from that disgrace which the squeamish fastidiousnes of some persons have attached to it.

"It is to be recollected, that the most beautiful and impressive doctrines of the divine Founder of Christianity were delivered, not in the Temple, but on the Mount.

"To wave the question of devotion, and turn to human eloquence,—the most effectual and splendid specimens were not pronounced within walls. Demosthenes addressed the public and popular assemblies; Cicero spoke in the forum. That this added to their effect on the minds of both orator and hearers, may be conceived from the difference between what we read of the emotions then and there produced, and those we ourselves experience in the perusal in the closet. It is one thing to read the Iliad at Sigæum and on the tumuli, or by the springs, with Mount Ida above, and the plains, and rivers, and the Archipelago round you: and another to trim your taper over it in a snug library;—*this* I know.

The characters of a Whitefield, a Wesley, a Cennick, a Hill, and a Wills, are ever to be admired for the good they have been the instruments of doing this way. May God send more such into his vineyard, to call the poor wandering sheep to the fold of the Great Shepherd. And now let me intreat you to intersede for me at a throne of grace, that in the little circle in which I move I may be a blessing, and the means of communicating good to my fellow-mortals, and that while I am instructing others, I myself may be under the teachings of the good Spirit of God, without which all will be in vain. Happy shall I be in the last day, to find myself the spiritual father of a numerous offspring; then shall all the glory be ascribed to our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

" I remain,
" Your's constantly and willingly,
" C. B."

No. XXVI.

" Farnham, Surrey, 23d October, 1793.

" I hope by this time your minds are a little more composed, and that the Lord hath been your comforter and support. Distressing, very distressing

" Were the early and rapid progress of what is called Methodism to be attributed to any cause beyond the enthusiasm excited by its vehement faith and doctrines, (the truth or error of which I presume neither to canvas nor to question,) I should venture to ascribe it to the practice of preaching in the *fields*, and the unstudied and extemporaneous effusions of its teachers."
BYRON, *Notes to 3d Canto of Childe Harold.*

was the late dispensation of Providence, and those who were possessed of the least degree of sensibility, must have felt for, and sympathized with you. However, what an unspeakable advantage is it that you, with all the people of God, have access to a throne of grace, under all circumstances, and in all situations. Were it not for this, what could we do when the world condemns, when Providence frowns, and when numerous trials and afflictions surround us; but God is pleased, though he is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, though he is encompassed with unspeakable grandeur, and dwells in ineffable glory, I say he is pleased to look down upon those who make known their supplications to him, and hath promised to hear their cries, and relieve them in their distress. Let us then, my dear friends, go with boldness to the Lord, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need. Let us have less to do with earth, and more with heaven. Let it be our ambition to keep up communion with God. Let us endeavour to estrange ourselves from the creature, to maintain a happy intimacy with the Creator. It is the glory of angelic beings, and of all the saints in the celestial world, to get near and be like to him, whose presence is heaven; and in proportion as we are conformed to, and have his divine image impressed upon our souls, will be our felicity. No trials that come, no enemies that oppose, no clouds of sorrow that arise, can hinder him from manifesting his love, and making us happy with his smiles, if faith is in exercise. Like the glorious sun, he will break through all,

and shine with resplendent rays, to gladden our disconsolate hearts, and discover to us the path of safety, wherein we should walk, till at last we arrive at our desired rest.

But, should not the recent instance of mortality, remind us of that period, when the King of terrors will be commanded to unlock the gates and break down the walls of our earthly tabernacles, that the noble inhabitant, the never-dying spirit, may be no longer confined, but wing its way to an eternal world? Ah me, what an awful thought! The shroud, the coffin, the grave, must soon be our lot! Gloomy idea; we that are alive and well to-day, in a little time must be deposited among the dead; a prey to insects, an offence to man! But stop, is this all? Are our meditations to be confined here? No. Thanks be to our gracious Redeemer, we can look further than these things; and though nature trembles at an opening grave, grace can enable us to see a land on the other side Jordan, where death has no power. Why then should we startle at the thought of dissolution? Being interested in the favour of him who hath taken away the enemy's sting; surely we may long for the day, when the silver cord of life shall be loosened, and we set at everlasting liberty. O transporting thought! are we not lost in the view of that glory, which will surround us, when our eyes will be dazzled with the splendours of heaven, our minds awed with the grandeur of God, and our souls absorbed in the contemplation of his infinite love and grace. Lord grant that I may behold it.

" I remain your affectionate

R " C. B."

One of the "labours of love" with which Mr. Buck commenced the year 1794, was the following letter to an afflicted friend:

No. XXVII.

"Farnham, Jan. 1, 1794.

"I hope, through a divine blessing, Mrs. P. is much recovered, and that the Lord has sanctified the affliction of body to the prosperity of the soul. To be under almost continual pain must be no small trial; but the Lord can give strength and grace sufficient to bear it without murmuring. To him, therefore, ought we to look in every time of pain and distress; and blessed be his name, he is a wise Physician, who can heal not only the diseases of the animal frame, but the maladies of the immortal spirit. It is only for him to speak the word, and we shall be made whole! His power is adequate, his grace is sufficient to remove every thing that clogs the vital part, that hinders our hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He knows our situation better than we do ourselves, and what will be the most effectual remedies for us in our spiritual sickness. We often are seeking for those things which we imagine will be useful; but the Lord shows us that they are of no value, and that nothing will do except he comes with his sovereign balm to heal our wounds, to strengthen and support our souls during our earthly pilgrimage. "O Lord, heal us and we shall be healed, save us and we shall be saved."

"But, whilst I am writing this letter, I cannot help reflecting on the mercy and goodness of our

God in preserving us to the beginning of a new year. O! how many have been cut down as cumberers of the ground, and sent into eternity since the beginning of the last year, and yet we are spared! Let us look back to the last year, and consider how many blessings, how many privileges we have enjoyed, how many evils we have escaped, how oft the Lord has kindly stepped in to our assistance, when our feet had well nigh slipped; how hath he enabled us to fight under his banner, and to be more than conquerors over all our spiritual enemies, while thousands have been left to perish in want and in their sins. Surely we have reason to "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits. The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, we have a goodly heritage." But, let us take another view, and that is in reference to ourselves. How little have we lived to the glory of God the past year, how many precious moments have we lost, how little valued our privileges and blessings, how little has been our improvement in proportion to the means we have enjoyed, how dull have our capacities been, and how few spiritual lessons have we learned from the calamities that have happened, the catastrophes we have heard of, or even the circumstances that have transpired within our own circle! How indifferent have we been about the best things, and how insensible of the loving-kindness of our God! Whatever, my dear friends, may be your feelings, upon this retrospect, for my own part I must say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" But, should the Lord spare us yet a little longer, let us consider what we

can do to promote his glory. Let us look upon our moments as of more worth than gold, and endeavour to improve them to the best advantage. And as a new year will bring new difficulties, let us be imploring the blessing of our God, that he may be our director, keeper, preserver, and friend; and should we die this year, may we be able to look at death with composure, and at last be found in the mansions of eternal glory, to adore and praise our God for ever and ever. I now remain, my dear friend, your's affectionately and sincerely,

"C. B."

The ensuing letter is addressed to his mother, and those which follow to different friends.

No. XXVIII.

"Farnham, January 2, 1794.

"I could not get an opportunity to come and see you before I left town, but I suppose you have heard of my being here. The chapel where I now preach is exceedingly neat, and when quite finished will hardly be equalled by any in London of the size. The congregation are continually giving me invitations to stay, but I do not think I shall comply with them, as the work will be rather too much for my constitution. I have been very poorly since I have been here: I hope you are well in health, and happy in mind. The infirmities of old age begin to come upon you, and you sometimes think, perhaps, of the time when you must give up all things here, and enter into another world. I hope

the thought will not appear terrific to you, though distressing it must be to your children. However, I must say a word, and that is, as you know something of the doctrines of the gospel, as recorded in the Bible, I trust you will never rest satisfied without feeling the power and tasting the sweetness of them in your heart; you know that a mere profession of religion, or even what is called morality of conduct, will not take a man to heaven, except the heart is changed by the Spirit of God, and brought to depend upon Christ alone. It is through his blood that our sins must be forgiven, and by his merits only that we can be saved: and, whenever a man is born again of the Spirit, and is enabled to look to Christ for justification, he will not live in a careless, loose manner. It is impossible; for being united to him who is infinitely holy, he must be holy too. And by this, my dear mother, you and I must try ourselves, and see whether we are interested in Christ or not. If we are, our lives will be consistent, our tempers will not be violent and outrageous; but it will be our ambition to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present *evil* world. Let us be careful, then, about this matter, and let no day slip without prayer and self-examination. Time is short, death and eternity are near. May we be prepared for both. I now remain,

"Your affectionate son,

"C. B."

No. XXIX.

" Farnham, January 6, 1794.

" With pleasure I inform you, that I am better in health than when I wrote to you last. My breast is less painful, and my spirits revive; but whether in health or in sickness, I wish to recollect that the Lord doth all things well. Whatever may be our situation, we have no cause for murmuring. If we compare our comforts with our crosses, our mercies with our sins, our afflictions with our deserts, there is every reason to be contented and thankful. But, there is too great a propensity in us to be dissatisfied with the proceedings of our Heavenly Father, and though we know that not even one circumstance can be altered, or rendered otherwise than he designed it, yet how foolishly do we wish that things were ordered differently to what they are. What a source of grief is our corruption! The unbelief, pride, self-will, and impatience that lie hidden in our hearts are causes of perpetual sorrow. Were it not for these, what a superior degree of happiness should we enjoy to what we do at present. However, it is a mercy that we are sensible of our depravity; it will tend to make us loath ourselves, and look to the Lord Jesus Christ for help; he it is that can heal our diseases, and give us health and prosperity of soul. O! that we could place ourselves under his care, and be more attentive to his word. We too often place dependance upon earthly helps. Ordinances and ministers are our resources, and we are confiding in them as if they could relieve us:

but these, however excellent as instruments, cannot do that for us which we want. Let the Lord alone, then, be the object of our confidence; he is the Fountain of Living Waters to purify us; the Sun of Righteousness to enliven us; the great Physician to heal us; the Almighty King to govern us; the everlasting Friend to support us; the all-wise Counsellor to direct us; the tender Shepherd to protect us! However weak and insignificant we are, yet his characters just suit our impotency, his promises our situation. He is wisdom to us in our ignorance; light to us in our darkness; strength for us in our weakness; comfort *in* us in our misery; righteousness for us in our imperfection; salvation to us in our danger. O! what a wonderful suitability is here! We are nothing, he is every thing; we are as a blank, he all and in all. O that this Saviour may be ours in life, in death, and for ever.

" I must thank you for your kind answer to my letter, and may you ever be blessed with such sentiments as you therein discover, while you enjoy the refreshing influences of that gracious Spirit, who I hope has sealed you to the day of redemption. The smiles of God, to you, I know, are of more value than ten thousand worlds, and his approbation of more importance than all the favour and esteem of mortals, however aggrandized and elevated. O! what an honour, my dearest friend, is it to sit at the feet of Christ! A king thinks it is honour to sit on a throne; the judge thinks it is honour to sit on the bench; and the generality of men think it their honour to sit in the presence of the great and noble. But what situation, what honour like that of Mary's?

Let the world fight and strive: let the ungodly be ambitious after earthly grandeur; here may you and I be found for ever. Here may we sit contemplating and adoring the excellencies of our glorious Immanuel, until that blessed day when we shall be called from the world below to the world above, where faith will be turned into sight, anticipation into possession, and hope into enjoyment. Until then, may our hearts be knit with the tenderest sympathy, united by the strongest affection, filled with the most genuine joy, influenced by the kind love of Immanuel, and then, at last, guarded by his power and surrounding angels, we part to meet again, and meet to part no more.

"I remain, &c.

"C. B."

No. XXX.

Mr. Boulton, Hillsley, Gloucestershire.

"Hoxton Academy, March 8, 1794.

"Dear Friend—I am glad to find that you are so much recovered from the severe indisposition of body with which you have been lately exercised. Sickness is one of those evils sin has brought upon us, and from which few are always exempt while in this mortal state. The human frame is of so delicate a make, so tender in all its parts, that it is easily impaired, and sometimes the least inattention will lay a foundation for some dreadful disease, which will not lose its hold, till it has destroyed the

vitals, and brought its possessor to the house appointed for all living. However, I would be thankful with you that the Lord has been pleased to restore you your wonted health, and I hope that you will be able to see that the Supreme Disposer of all events hath been infinitely wise in causing you to pass through the fire. As we are sometimes led to set a greater value upon our blessings, by being for a time deprived of them, so perhaps, (after this trial,) should you enjoy your health in future, you will be more thankful for it, and more careful of it. Your letter informs me of the resignation you felt when in your affliction, and that you could give up all that was dear to you in this life, so that you might be with Christ. Happy situation your's! to be enabled stedfastly to look to Christ in that moment when we imagine we see death before us, when we are about to close our eyes, to take our last farewell of all things here, when the band that binds us to the world, is about to be broken, when we are about to plunge into that boundless ocean, eternity; I say, in such a moment as this to be happy, is an inestimable blessing indeed. And yet such happiness have the children of God experienced. What manifestations of divine love; what astonishing views of Christ; what noble fortitude; what extatic joys; what divine support have they had, when passing through that vale, which in itself is so dark and gloomy, and which to many has been so terrific!

" I am glad to hear that the last sermon I preached among you has been made useful; but I had

rather be excused from printing it, as desired. I am rather backward to do any thing of this kind at present, for two reasons; first, as I have not yet left the Academy; and, secondly, as I am conscious of my inability to appear as an author with credit. I have, it is true, some time ago, published several things in the magazines, but now I have even ceased from that, as I have so little time and experience, and as every day I live I am more convinced of my own ignorance, and the necessity of close application for the increasing of my intellectual store. Tell the good people, therefore, that they shall have my prayers in private, and that whenever I come that way, they shall have my labours in public; but that as yet I wish not to appear in print. Hoping your family and self are well, I remain, my dear friend,

" Your's very affectionately,

" C. B."

No. XXXI.

Rev. T. Symmons, Wotton Under-edge, Gloucestershire.

" Hoxton Academy, March 15, 1794.

" Dear Friend—Your kind letter came safe to hand, and I now sit down to answer it. You desire me to send you some intelligence relative to the kingdom of grace in my own soul. Of this I can say but little, or at least cannot say much, as to any advancement in knowledge, or progress in the divine life. I find innumerable evils constantly rising, and

striving to gain the ascendancy over me, while Satan is ever busy in proposing temptations, and laying baits in the way. I feel in myself at times a sad propensity to unbelief. There are hardly any of the doctrines of grace that I am not sometimes ready to doubt, and I am conscious that there is not that trusting in, relying upon, or living to the Lord as there ought to be. Yet I bless God, that notwithstanding the power of corruption within, and the assaults of enemies without, I dare not give up. Weak as I am, I can say that I wish to be more devoted to the Lord. O! that he may lead me by his counsel here, and afterwards bring me to glory. With regard to the progress of the gospel in general, it is difficult to determine. The number of professors is great; many are the houses built for the preaching of the everlasting gospel; and there are not a few who are commissioned by the Great Head of the Church to promulgate those sentiments found in the sacred records. But after all, few, comparatively speaking, know the truth any otherwise than in speculation. Few feel the power, taste the sweetness, and rejoice in the fulness of the grace of Christ. Alas! too many are contented with only hearing the gospel, especially if it is delivered with a degree of pathos, set forth by the powers of oratory, displayed in a pleasing manner, or almost corrupted by a too nice attention to the elegance of language or refinement of style. And indeed there is a something so entertaining, so sublime, so beautiful and grand, in the sacred scriptures, and in the gospel of Jesus Christ, that men are oftentimes pleased

with them, without ever being profited by them: they give credence to the truths asserted, acknowledge the excellency of them, and think they have done well, while they rest satisfied in their sins, and can perpetrate the most atrocious crimes without any remorse of conscience. My dear friend, it becomes us, as the ambassadors of God, to be faithful to such characters, whenever we stand up in that awful place the pulpit, and to pray much in secret, that religion may have a greater influence on the minds and conduct of professors, that they may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work."

"As to politics, what shall I say? I seldom trouble myself much about them. The present state of affairs is gloomy, but let us hope for the best. With respect to the French, I think the Lord is doing two things at once, punishing them for their abominable infidelity and persecution of the saints of God in past ages, and likewise making way for the propagation of the glorious gospel in that country, which has been so long under the most dreadful darkness. I preached on the Fast-day, from Ezek. 4, 5, 6. The heads of my sermon were these, 1st, When men give themselves up to work wickedness, God oftentimes visits them with sore calamities, ver. 6. 2d. When iniquity abounds, it is a cause of great grief to the people of God. Sigh and cry, ver. 4. 3d. Whatever calamity falls upon a nation or people, the righteous shall be safe. Set a mark, &c. ver. 4. —I have here no room to give you any part of the amplification of these particulars; however, I be-

lieve I could not be accused of sedition .... It is best to say nothing in the pulpit about politics; let us preach the gospel, and at the same time show that we are not *inimici ad libertatem.*

"I remain your's sincerely, "C. B."

During this year, the last devoted by him to academical pursuits, Mr. B. visited several vacant congregations, with a view to the pastoral office. Some of his letters are dated from Banbury, a place where the Cockatrice Antinomianism for many years brooded over her accursed offspring, and where her family increased, until mutual animosities, the never-failing consequence where she gains a being and an ascendancy, exposed them first to abhorrence, and then reduced them to nothing. This "abomination of desolation" had begun to operate at the period when Mr. B. first visited Banbury; and after three months labour there, he declined the invitation of the people, observing, "that the diversity of opinions prevailing among them" led him to this determination; a step which I am inclined to believe he never afterwards regretted.

From Banbury he thus writes to various friends:

No. XXXII.

"Banbury, March 31, 1794.

"I preached yesterday three times. In the morning and evening found it pleasant, but in the afternoon was rather heavy. They have here a very com-

modious and neat place of worship, which perhaps may hold five or six hundred people, but it was not full. I can give you no account of the people yet, as I have had no time to converse with them. I hope the Lord will be with me while I am here, and give me some seals to my ministry. I think here is some prospect of doing good, as the people of the town are not such violent enemies to the cause as they are in some places. May the Lord grant that I may cry aloud, and spare not; that I may be an instrument in his hand of doing some little good among them. This, I trust I can say, is my sole desire, and hope it ever will be my ambition, not to preach *myself*, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

"I am quite happy in the reflection on the business of Friday last.* I did not think I should have come off with such *eclat;* but the Lord disappointed my fear, and made that which I dreaded terminate in a degree of pleasure. So it is, that oftentimes where we expect a bitter we find a sweet. I confess my mind has been so unhinged for some time past, that I have been quite indisposed for every thing, but now the burden is removed, my mind is set at liberty. I pray God it may not make an addition to my pride; I have too much of that cursed evil already, and am fearful of any thing that may augment it. Whatever degree of success we meet with, or however acceptable, humility becomes us. This is a grace which should be an attendant in every situation; it is

* His examination and preaching before the Evangelical Society at Hoxton.

a star which ought constantly to be worn on the breasts of the princes of the court of heaven, and should cast a splendour on all our conduct, so that all may see it, and be constrained to say, that we are walking humbly with our God. Pray for me, therefore, that I may be kept in my proper place, and ever have proper views of myself, and that I may always remember that it is by the grace of God that I am what I am.—There is something so noble, so refined, so satisfactory, in conversing with God, that a true believer will relinquish every thing of an earthly nature for the enjoyment of it. Earthly comforts tend to clog and make this world more desirable; but heavenly ones enliven the soul, and lead it to look to the world above, where it shall for ever drink of that fountain of felicity which is inexhaustible. O! that we may ever consider it our privilege, our honour, to be found waiting upon the Lord; may it be our delight to be carrying on correspondence with him.

"C. B."

No. XXXIII.

"Banbury, April 9, 1794.

"I have just parted with Mr. ——, of Coventry. He came here yesterday, and preached the last evening at the meeting. His text was Acts, xiv. 3. "Which gave testimony unto the word of his grace." We had a tolerably large congregation, and the Lord, I hope, was with us. Mr. —— is a useful preacher, an agreeable companion, and above all, I

believe, an eminent Christian. We expect Mr. —— next week, with whom I hope to have a comfortable interview, as I know he is a man of sterling piety and real worth. O! if it be such pleasure to have communion with the servants of the Lord, what pleasure must it yield to have communion with the Lord himself! All the excellencies of the creature are but reflections of his glory and the effects of his grace. I wish, therefore, to be led from a view of those excellencies in man to a contemplation of the exalted perfections of God. He is infinitely great and glorious, and demands our constant regard; he is worthy of all, and infinitely more adoration and praise than we as sinful creatures can render unto him. For myself, I wish to exert every power, and to use every effort, to set forth his praise; and what felicity is there in beholding his goodness, as manifested to such rebellious creatures! He remembered us in our low estate, and sent his Son, his only begotten Son, into this world, to bleed, groan, suffer, and die, that we might be delivered from the curse of that law we had broken, and be saved in the Lord with an eternal salvation. May not I, may not you and all, say, "What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits, and especially for this great act of love?"

"I find the people here, as yet, agreeable, and though a mixed congregation, unanimous. I had a comfortable day the last Sabbath, and we were more in number than the Sabbath before. I hope it will be a growing interest, and that the Lord hath a great work to do in this place. The cause, I think, has

been rather hurt by the misconduct of some of the preachers who have been here. You would be shocked if you were to hear how some have behaved. No wonder the world inveighs so much against professors and preachers of religion, when so many have acted so inconsistent a part. Awful it is, when occasion is given for enemies to be more prejudiced against the truth. O! my dearest friend, pray for me, that I may preach well with my life, if not with my lips.

"It has rained almost every day since I have been here, so that I have been much confined. I long for some fine weather, that I may get out a little, to tread the verdant lawns, survey the spacious plains, and behold the wondrous works of the Almighty's hand. To a contemplative mind, the country yields innumerable objects which display the wisdom and power of our God, especially at this season, when all things are springing into life, and Nature about to disrobe herself of her wintry garb, and put on her most lovely appearance. I thank you for your kind and truly spiritual epistle; it was edifying, it was consolatory. Hoping you and all are well, I subscribe myself,

"Your's very affectionately,

"C. B."

No. XXXIV.

Rev. T. Wills.

" Banbury, April 14, 1794.

" My dear Sir—Through mercy I had a safe journey hither, and find the people agreeable and kind. Banbury is rather a large town, and the place of worship is commodious and neat, and perhaps will hold five or six hundred people. The galleries and the sides under them are pretty well filled, but many of the middle seats are empty (though I believe most of them are taken), which makes it look uncomfortable. There is some opportunity of doing good in this country, as they say there are nearly sixty villages within no great compass. They wish me to stay three months, but I have only engaged for three Sabbaths longer than my first proposal, as I wish to be at the Academy the last three weeks or month of my time. The people are agreeable to this, and wish me to come back afterwards should I like it; but I can say nothing relative to this at present—I desire to follow the leadings of Providence, and to be in that situation where I could be useful. London I am partial to, because of my friends and connections, but the country I prefer for retirement and study. I find daily necessity for this. I know not how a young minister can preach often to a stated congregation with pleasure and profit, without much application, constant reading, and fervent prayer. The work is arduous, and ought not to be attended to in a superficial manner. Though I believe all the

knowledge and accomplishments ministers may obtain, will be of no avail, without that wisdom which cometh down from above.—The teachings of the Spirit are of the greatest importance, and of most utility to a minister of the gospel. Forget not, therefore, dear Sir, when you approach the throne of grace, to pray that I may be under his continual influence, that humility and love, zeal and faithfulness, may be the shining characteristics in my deportment and conduct. I gave the guinea to Mr. Wilson as you desired, and he wished me to ascertain the name, if possible, and to inform him, as the collector otherwise will not know where to call when he goes round. But, alas! I find he is gone to his long home. Little did I think then that his dissolution was so near: but I hope he is now safe and happy in the participation of that felicity which awaits all the children of God. What a privilege it is to be a Christian? How can such a one look forward to death and eternity with the greatest composure? He can bid adieu to all terrestrial things, and take leave of his dearest friends with pleasure, knowing that he is going to the enjoyment of his best Friend above! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. I now conclude, wishing you much of our Lord's presence, and am, dear Sir, your willing and humble servant,

"C. B."

No. XXXV.

"Banbury, Oxfordshire, April 15, 1704.

"—— You are almost ready to conclude that I have forgotten you, but this will prove to the contrary. I came safe down, thank God, and am pretty well in health. I thought to have returned next week, but they wish me to stay longer; I have therefore engaged to tarry two or three weeks more. I know not yet whether I shall settle here, but should have no objection to a situation somewhere in this part, as it is between Gloucestershire and London, and no considerable distance from either. However, I wish to be where the Lord would have me, and where I can be serviceable to my fellow-creatnres, by preaching the everlasting gospel. This, I trust, is my desire, and hope it will be my pursuit, while life shall last. My time at the Academy will now soon expire, and my studies there, I hope, will yield some advantage in time to come. But I wish to be a more diligent student of God's word, so as not only to understand the meaning, but taste the sweetness and feel the power of it in my own heart. Without this, all my other knowledge will be of no avail, either as to my happiness or usefulness. But I will not write any longer about myself; I am writing to you, and therefore feel it my duty to say something, if possible, to your profit and advantage; if a child may be permitted to address a parent. Let me ask you, then, if you have such a view of yourself, of your own depravity and unworthiness, as to be led to depend alone upon the infinite merits of Christ

for salvation? Do you know what it is to be under the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost? Do you find a greater pleasure in religion than in any thing else; and is it your desire to devote your time and all you have to that glorious Being who hath done so much for you? Do you feel the Gospel of Christ to have any effect upon your temper, mind, and conduct. O! that you, and I, and all the family, may never rest satisfied with any thing short of this. But, I am afraid it is not so with all of us. I wish there were more concern about the best things, for I tremble when I think how awful it would be were any of your children to be separated in another world, some in happiness, and others in misery. God forbid that any one of us should fall into that pit from whence there is no redemption! And what can we expect, except there is repentance? This is a serious matter—it is not a trifle. It is not irrational to consider it. May we be wise unto salvation is my earnest prayer. I now remain,

"Your obedient son,

"C. B."

No. XXXVI.

"Banbury, April 19, 1794.

"I have been thinking all day of going out this evening, but instead of it I sit down to write to you. I told you, in a former letter, that the bad weather had detained me at home; but the other evening it was fine, and I had a most pleasant and I hope pro-

fitable walk. The sun, with his cheering rays, made every thing look bright and gay; the wind served the place of a gentle fan, while the little choristers of the air, with their various notes, performed their work with wonderful skill; the banks were strewed with variegated flowers, and the fields clothed with living green. All alone, my mind was employed in happy contemplation on that glorious object, whose powerful hand brought all these beauties into existence for the good, the happiness of man. As I walked on, I met a grey-headed old man, with his bundle of sticks, moving gently on, as if hardly capable of sustaining his burden. Ah! thought I, old age, thou oughtest to be venerated, but yet how soon must thou submit to the monster Death. How near art thou to an eternal world, and soon, very soon, must be brought to the house appointed for all living! I proceeded, till at last I came to a narrow avenue, with lofty trees on each side, among which were some firs, which retained their verdure, though the others had been stripped of all their cloathing. Lively emblem, said I, of the difference between nominal Christians and real ones; the latter, like the fir-tree, are not materially injured by the winter of adversity; but the former cannot stand the nipping frosts of persecution and temptation, but soon lose their apparent beauty. As I returned, the sun was drawing near the horizon, and soon was out of sight, when I could not help imploring the grace of our indulgent Father, that my sun might not set in a cloud, but decline with pleasing smiles. Thus I have just given you the outlines of my evening's

entertainment, and surely what can be more profitable than thus to improve an hour's walk? Methinks there is more felicity to be found in this than in all the fineries, routs, and entertainments of the great. .....I have lately been reading Brooks's precious Remedies against Satan's Devices. It is good old divinity, and I should think very proper to be read by those who are much exposed to temptations. Speaking of the insufficiency of worldly good to make men happy, he says, "You may as soon fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue, or a circle with a triangle, as the heart of man with any thing here below. A man may have enough of the world to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him." This I believe is true, and the more we know of the world, the more we shall see the truth of Solomon's observation, All is vanity and vexation of spirit. O! that we may be led out of it, to depend more upon him in whom real and permanent happiness is to be found. I wish you much of the Lord's presence on Tuesday, and hope it will be a profitable day. I hope the little journey will likewise be of service to you, who are always buried in the smoke, and dinned with the noise of London. Were you of my mind, you would breathe the country air oftener: it is pleasant, it is salubrious. May you find it so. I now subscribe myself,

"Your's affectionately,

"C. B."

XXXVII.

" Banbury, April 28, 1794.

" This morning I am quite fatigued, having preached three times yesterday. This is rather too much for my weak constitution, and whether it will be justifiable for me to do it for a continuance, I can hardly tell; because too hard labour at first setting out may cut short my usefulness in future days; yet I can truly say, that I desire to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. I think, of the two, I would rather die in the exercise, than, on the other hand, to be guilty of indolence and unfaithfulness. Much more noble is it to fall in the field of battle, than to run away as a coward, and be charged with acting an inconsistent part. May the glorious Captain of my salvation enable me to be strong in his grace, and to endure hardness as a good soldier, then shall I come off at last, not as a vanquished enemy, but victorious conquerer.....I have lately been reading the history of Greenland, with a relation of the mission carried on there for above thirty years by the United Brethren, written by David Crants, who, I apprehend, was a Moravian missionary. I must confess it is a wonderful work. Mr. Newton says of it, " None who love the Lord will refuse to say it is the finger of God indeed. For my own part, my soul rejoices in it, and I honour the instruments as men who have hazarded their lives in an extraordinary manner for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Sure I am, that none could have sustained such discouragements at first, or have ob-

tained such success afterwards, unless the Lord had sent, supported, and owned them."—See his Cardiphonia, vol. ii. p. 116. I never saw the work till I came here, and it has afforded me great pleasure, and I hope profit, in the perusal of it.

" Saturday evening I treated myself with another walk. The evening was mild, and the sun had tinged the scattered clouds with golden hue. At a distance the lofty spire was seen rearing its head above the stately trees. Here the ground was covered with beautiful flowers; there it was spread with handsome green, and formed an acceptable carpet, more to be admired than the production of human art. Ascending a rising ground, an extensive prospect opened to my view. Hills, dales, and verdant plains, filled with useful cattle; the young lambs frisking about the fields; the birds all alive, welcoming the returning spring. Here, thought I, the difficulty of ascending an eminence is always repaid by the prospect it affords. So, just so, is it in regard to the difficulties a believer meets with. Hard it is to get up the hill of difficulty; but what profit, what pleasure, doth it afford in the end. Our prospect is brightened, we see more of the goodness of our God, we are convinced of the vanity of all transitory things, and it makes us long to enjoy more of him from whom all our felicity comes; we are lifted above all the vain concerns of the world, and can behold with indifference the things of time and sense. Let us also remember, that the dark avenue of death leads to a pleasant land, and the way to the mount of glory is through the path of difficulty. O!

may you and I so walk in this wilderness world, as not to lose sight of that happy place where we shall look back with pleasure, and confess that the Lord hath led us forth by a right way.

"I remain your's, inviolably yours,

"C. B."

No. XXXVIII.

Rev. T. Wills.

"Banbury, Oxon, April 29, 1794.

"My dear Sir—Your kind letter I received, and think myself much obliged to you for your attention to my interest and happiness. I can only express my gratitude by saying, that you shall not be forgotten by me when I have the privilege to draw near to the throne of grace, that the Lord may favour you abundantly, and that in the declining years of life you may be still made more useful, and enjoy much of our dear Redeemer's presence.

"You say you thought Mr. M—— was to settle here. They gave him a call, but he has put a negative upon it. Had I not known this, I should not have come. You might well be at a loss (not knowing this circumstance) how they could want my services. As to my being here for a time, or in town after I have left the Academy, I really cannot give any satisfactory answer, nor perhaps shall I be able to determine till I have had some conversation with you. My mind at present seems to be in the dark what to do, though the advice you have

given me is indeed very proper and suitable, and I could wish to follow it. I know, go where I will, I cannot be exempt from difficulties, and it would be foolish for me to think of a situation entirely without them, yet flesh and blood beg hard to be at ease, and do not like to meet with things that are disagreeable. However, here is one advantage, that there is no cross I experience, but my Lord can turn it into a comfort; no pain but he can turn it into pleasure, and no trial but he can make subservient to my profit and advantage. The trials attendant on a gospel ministry look formidable, when considered in themselves, but viewed with the eye of faith, they are all necessary, and, in the end, prove of the greatest utility. Happy the man who can repose his confidence in the Lord, refer every concern to his hand, and trust all to his wisdom and faithfulness. Surely such a one shall possess that multiplicity of peace of which the prophet speaks, and in the midst of the raging billows and threatening storms of life he shall be safe.

"I hope your journey to Farnham has been pleasant and profitable. I suppose you had a full congregation, as they long wanted to see you.....I expect to be at home by the third Sabbath, that is, the 18th of May, when I shall be at your service, if wanted. Hope you, Mrs. Wills, and Miss Thornhill are well. My best respects to them, if you please; and am, dear Sir,

"Your willing and humble servant,

"C. B."

No. XXXIX.

Rev. T. Wills.

"Banbury, May 10, 1794.

"My dear Sir—I thank you for the early information you have given me respecting Hampstead, but can hardly tell how to reply. I cannot say that I find much inclination to go thither, because, if my idea of it be right, it is rather a barren place and but few people; though perhaps it might be rendered otherwise if they had a settled minister whom they approved. I should not like to determine, till I have had some conversation with you; but if there be a necessity for their having a minister before then, I think you may recommend the person you speak of. As to Farnham, I would also decline going thither, I prefer the present situation were I to choose of the two. The people are very anxious for my return here, but I have not given them a decisive answer; nor do I wish to do it hastily. May the Lord direct my steps, and never suffer me to have any thing in view but his glory, and the good of immortal souls. Too many, indeed, are seeking great things for themselves, without any regard for the good of their fellow creatures; without thinking that their grand end should be *usefulness*. It requires great grace to direct young persons who are just launching into the sea of this world which way to steer. There is a sad propensity in us to do that which is wrong, and oftentimes a strange backwardness to do that which is right; and what between

an unripe judgment on the one hand, and a precipitancy of mind too common to youth on the other, we are often betrayed into that which in the end, perhaps, is not so consistent or so comfortable. Happy shall I be if I am under the influence of that wisdom which is profitable to direct, and can place all my confidence on him who knows what is best for me. It is a consolatory truth, "trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and *he shall direct thy paths.*" May I be enabled to follow the advice, and learn to commit every thing into the hands of Him who doth all things well. I thank you for considering me as the first on your list. May that sincere affection which I believe has subsisted, never be dissolved, nor any thing transpire which may tend to lessen it, is my earnest prayer. My best respects to Mrs. Wills and Miss T.; hope they are well,

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your willing and humble servant,

"C. B."

On his return to Hoxton, having received a unanimous invitation from the congregation at Banbury, Mr. B. returned to that invitation the following judicious answer.

No. XL.

"Hoxton, May 29, 1794.

"Dear friends—On Saturday last I received your kind invitation to come and settle as pastor over the congregation of which you make a part. I can say sincerely that I desire to follow the leadings of Providence, and to be in that situation where my ministry will not merely be acceptable but useful. In regard to Banbury there are some disadvantages which a minister must labour under in coming among you (at least for the present.) There is a debt upon the place of worship which perhaps will be some time before it be liquidated: preaching three times a day, which is too much for any one man who wishes to preach about in the villages in the week; and what is of most importance, no regularity or order as to church government, without which no religious society can properly exist. These are the most prominent objections, and certainly they are of some consequence. However, I wish not to view them as insurmountable. They may perhaps in time be obviated; and as I have no other end in view but the glory of my Master and the good of immortal souls, I am come to the following conclusion, to pay you another visit for three months, and if in the course of that time the people can be formed into a church, and will submit to what is generally called independent or congregational discipline; if they seem happy among themselves, and with me, and if the Lord be pleased to make me useful, and the work appears to prosper,

you need not then be afraid of my deserting you. But to be precipitate and to give a positive answer to a call, before I know what a people are, (or they know what I am,) and before I know whether it will be a situation conducive to profit and happiness, I say, I think this would be wrong. I must confess that I believe you stand in need of a minister, and I hope there is a prospect of usefulness. But let me remind you particularly of this one thing; that whether I or any other minister come among you, his happiness depends upon your prayers and conduct. If you wish to have a person to preach well, to pray well, to live well, O do not forget him when you address the throne of grace. His trials are more than are known, he meets with difficulties which many are strangers to, his work is of the most awful, the most arduous nature. I beseech you, therefore, my dear friends, never to neglect praying for your minister, whoever he be, lest you should find the consequence of it, by being fed with that which will not in reality support the soul.....As to myself, you have already had a specimen of my preaching, and if the truth be spoken, you must witness that I have endeavoured to guard against legality on the one hand, and Antinomianism on the other. I wish to exalt Jesus Christ and debase the sinner, or at least to represent him as debased, and that he never can do any thing by way of merit, nor ever can come to Christ without a peculiar exertion of free grace and supernatural power.

" I have only one thing more to add, and that is respecting the service. If you cannot give up either

part of the day, as you seem to think you cannot, I propose the following method: In the morning to begin at eleven, to use a short prayer, and expound a little, so that the service be ended about twelve. In the afternoon to begin at a quarter before three, to leave out the short prayer before the chapter, and conclude the whole about four. In the evening as usual. I intend, God willing, to be with you by the first Sabbath in July: in the mean time pray for me, that my footsteps may be directed, and that I may seek to do the will of the Lord, however disagreeable it may be to flesh and blood.

"I remain, my dear friends,

"Your willing and humble servant,

"C. B."

Having completed his studies at the Academy, Mr. B. addressed the following letter of thanks to the Chairman and Committee of the Evangelical Society:

No. XLI.

"June 28, 1794.

"Gentlemen—Sensible of the advantages I have derived from your excellent Institution, I think it my indispensable duty to acknowledge the same, and now desire to express my gratitude to you, and to the Lord, for the opportunity I have had of increasing my small stock of knowledge. Having staid the usual time of three years at the Academy, Providence hath been pleased to open a door, at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, from which place I have re-

ceived an invitation to settle with them as their pastor: I have therefore engaged to go for three months to make a trial, and now have to intreat your prayers on my behalf, that as the work of the ministry is of the most important and arduous nature, I may be enabled to sustain it with the greatest faithfulness and propriety; that I may be kept humble at the feet of Christ, and be made the happy instrument of doing good to immortal souls; and be assured, you shall not be forgotten by me at a throne of grace, that the Lord may in return pour down into your bosoms the best of blessings, and reward you a hundred fold.

" I am, Gentlemen,

" Your humble and willing servant,

" C. B."

To Mr. Wills, his tried friend and judicious adviser, Mr. B. thus writes, and discloses the mournful fact, that the congregation among whom he expected to be exceedingly useful, was tainted with the detestable heresy to which allusion has been already made.

No. XLII.

" Banbury, July 18, 1794.

" My dear Sir—Though I have no very particular intelligence to communicate at present, yet I take the liberty of sending you a few lines. I was brought safe here, through the mercy of our heavenly Father, and kindly received by the people.

They wish me to continue with them, but I can form no determination till I have been longer with and know more of them, and whether the Lord will be pleased to make the word prosperous. Some few, I am afraid, are rather leaning towards Huntingdon's scheme, which will render it disagreeable for any minister to settle with them; for such people in general, I believe, are very dogmatical, and are the cause of grief to many of God's ministers and people. I lately saw a Mr. Surman, from Chesham, whom perhaps you know, and he informs me there are some of these in his congregation, who have caused such distress, that he has left the place for three months, and told them, that except their principles be renounced, or their spirit altered, he cannot think of returning again. They so torture the minds, and hurt the feelings of true believers, wherever they are, that it is almost difficult to live with them with any degree of peace. I cannot say it is so bad here at present, but when persons imbibe such sentiments, they are so positive, that there is very little hope, I think, of continuing with them in peace, or of doing them any good. A question therefore arises, which I submit to your judgment, and wish you to resolve. Is it right that I should take no notice of such people and their sentiments, knowing that they are so obstinate, or not? Your thoughts upon this subject I shall be thankful for, as soon as you have an opportunity to write. I cannot say that I am the most fit in the world to face difficulties; but, however, as there can be no faithful gospel minister without them, (let him be in

what situation he may,) I hope I shall receive all that grace which will be adequate to support, and all that wisdom which will be profitable to direct; and there is a degree of pleasure arising from this consideration, that whatever trial the Lord calls his ministers or people to suffer, he will strengthen them under it. This is what I could wish to have more impressed upon my mind; but, alas! what through natural timidity, and the power of unbelief, I am frequently brought low, and my mind filled with gloomy fears. I want more strength from above, to enable me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and fight the Lord's battles with courage. It is to him I know I must look—it is from him I must derive every supply. O! for more faith to trust him in the darkest hour, to cast every care upon him, knowing that he doth all things well. Hope you, Mrs. Wills, and Miss Thornhill, enjoy your health. My best respects, if you please; and wishing you and they much of our dear Lord's presence,

" I remain, dear Sir,
" Your willing servant in the gospel,
" C. B."

In his narrative of this period, Mr. B. observes: —" While at Banbury, I took an opportunity of visiting Warwick, and passed a place called Edge Hill, where the famous battle was fought between the troops of Charles the First and the Parliament forces, in which there were about five thousand slain on the field of battle; but both sides claimed the

victory. I preached for that excellent man Mr. Moody, whose praise for sweetness of temper, mildness of manners, and useful exertions, is in all the churches, but who has since entered into his rest.

" I had also the curiosity to visit the village of Hanwell, not far from Banbury, renowned for being the residence, first, of the famous Mr. Dod, and afterwards of Dr. Robert Harris. Dr. Harris was a learned, grave, yet very acute divine: his sermons may sometimes be met with in one small folio volume. Clothed in the language of the age, they abound with the most striking and ingenious remarks.—He seemed to be quite an original; and in addressing Senators and persons of quality, he manifested the same faithfulness as he did to the poor inhabitants of Hanwell. He preached here with great success for forty years; for of Hanwell it is said, there was not a family in it where God's name was not in some measure called upon, nor a person that refused to be examined and instructed by him for a due partaking of the Lord's Supper. His income was not great; his children were many; yet he had no lack, which he gratefully acknowledged, saying, " that there was a secret blessing attended on house-keeping, for I am not able to give an account of my expenses and of God's supplies." He was driven at last away from this obscure village by the King's soldiers in the civil war, and became minister of the very parish where I now write this, St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate. He afterwards was made President of Trinity College, at Oxford, and rector

of Garlington, near Oxford, which is always annexed to it. He died in peace, 12th December, 1658, in the eightieth year of his age."

The next place visited by Mr. Buck was Sheerness, in Kent, where, under the guidance of an infinitely wise Providence, he commenced the stated labours of his ministry; and having arrived to this important period of his life, we shall close the chapter.

CHAP. III.

From the Commencement of Mr. Buck's Labours at Sheerness, to his Removal from thence to Hackney.

THE year 1795 was a memorable æra in the history of our friend. During this year he took the stated charge of a congregation, entered into the matrimonial connection, and was ordained to the pastoral office. One of the principal reasons which induced Mr. Buck to accept the invitation of the independent church at Sheerness, was the benefit which he expected to derive from the advice and friendship of Mr. Shrubsole, their venerable minister, whose age and infirmities required that some other person should be associated with him in discharging the duties of his important station. Mr. Buck was deemed, both by Mr. Shrubsole and the people, in all respects qualified to fill the situation; and as long as Mr. Shrubsole lived, Mr. B. rejoiced in it as a sphere of great usefulness and comfort. They laboured together as father and son in the gospel; no jealousies arose to embitter their intercourse; there was no presumptuous forwardness in the youth, no dictatorial consequence in the senior—mutual affection inspired mutual confidence. They ruled the church in love; they encouraged neither the slanderer nor the flatterer; one was not to be

depressed or exalted at the expense of the other. Thus upholding each other, the congregation respected and loved them both. Mr. S. did not view his youthful assistant in the character of a rival, nor did the assistant treat his venerable colleague as if he unnecessarily retained an office to which he was himself and alone fully competent. Who can read without pleasure Mr. Buck's account of his excellent friend:

" At Sheerness I found much satisfaction in the kindness of the friends, and the connection with Mr. Shrubsole. Mr. S. had been remarkably useful in raising the interest there, and laboured gratis for many years with great success. In him we see the truth of the remark, that God will preserve those for whom he has any work to do, for Mr. Shrubsole had many narrow escapes. Once he fell from the side of a ship then on the stocks, and was preserved by a scaffold at some distance from the ground: at another time he fell headlong from the side of a wharf into a dock, among several boats and lighters; he was once bitten by a mad dog, when the most dreadful apprehensions were entertained—but in all he was preserved. His Pilgrim is a very entertaining work, a new edition of which has not long since been published. He was a man of a lively imagination, great spirituality in preaching, and possessed abundance of pleasing anecdotes to enliven the social circle. He died with his hand in mine, February 7, 1797."

Finding that he was now comfortably settled, Mr. B. " took unto himself a wife." Union of

heart and of principle rendered this important step productive of great happiness to the parties immediately interested, and to their family. It was Mr. B.'s privilege to view, in every event, the care and wisdom of an over-ruling Providence. The sentiment of Cowper was familiar to his heart, before it appeared adorned with the piety and genius of the poet.

> "It is the allotment of the skies,
> The hand of the supremely wise,
> That guides and governs our affections,
> And plans and orders our connexions."

This wife of his youth was spared to him through all the changing scenes of his mortal existence. It was hers to watch over his premature decline, and to administer to him all the soothing comfort which long-endeared affection knows so well how to impart. She survives, widowed, but not friendless—resigned, but anticipating re-union and eternal blessedness with the spirit of him she loves, in that world where the inhabitants neither "marry nor are given in marriage." Her children live around her, and, allured to the skies by the bright example and happy destiny of their father, justify her affection, reward her care, and animate her hope.

To Dissenting Ministers, the season of their ordination is one of the most impressive and important in their public life. It is the precise point where they solemnly review the past, and look with awful interest into the future. It is then they recognise and confirm all the professions they have ever made

of religion, and their devotement to the cause of the Redeemer, and the charge of souls; that they publicly and for ever renounce the maxims, the spirit, the pursuits of the world, and before angels and men consecrate their whole being on the altar of piety; then they enrol themselves with confessors and martyrs, and proclaim with apostolic fervour, "Yea, doubtless, and we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." Mr. Buck, speaking of this event in his own life, observes, "A very serious time was now approaching;—the season of my ordination. For six weeks before, I had no peace in my mind. I viewed it as a matter of great importance, and trembled lest I should not get through with propriety; as I thought it most proper at that time to deliver my experience and confession of faith without any notes.* I made it a matter, however, of close application and fervent prayer.† The time arrived; and if ever I knew what it was to have prayer answered, and to experience divine assistance, it was then. For about an hour before we commenced the service, all that fear and anxiety which had so long oppressed my mind was entirely removed, and I felt such a sweetness and tranquillity of mind, almost unknown to me before. Should this fall into the hands of any in the like circum-

* It is now, I believe, more generally the case to read, in order to accuracy, and to prevent agitation of mind.

† We held a prayer-meeting also at my house, in relation to the ordination on the preceding Saturday.

stances, let them learn from hence to make every due preparation, get the mind solemnized, to be much in prayer, and then leave the event to God.

" The ordination service was conducted in the chapel at Sheerness in the following manner. The Rev. Mr. Ralph, of Maidstone, began with reading and prayer; the Rev. Mr. Bryson, of London, delivered the address, and received my confession of faith, &c.; the Rev. Robert Simpson, of Hoxton, prayed the ordination prayer, and gave the charge from 1 Tim. iv. 16.; the Rev. Mr. Shrubsole addressed the church and congregation from 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.; and the Rev. Mr. Leggat, of Stroud, concluded with prayer. I was enabled to go through my department in a manner far different from what I expected, and have reason to say God was with me of a truth. I rejoiced, however, when it was over, and said to my tutor, " that I had now got rid of a great burden." His reply I have often thought of since—" But you have taken a much greater burden on." The ministers supped with me that evening; I thought it an honour to have such a party under my roof—it was to me one of the most pleasant and interesting social meetings I ever enjoyed."

I am perfectly aware with what a sneer of supercilious contempt many dignified personages regard every mention of dissenting ordination. I know that they consider it an unhallowed and unwarrantable assumption of a right which is entrusted solely to episcopal hands. I have no inclination in this place to meet these proud objectors and their arrogant

claims; or I could fully show them, by the authority of scripture and the cogency of argument, that dissenters are qualified to designate to the most sacred office; that their ministers are accredited pastors, and the various distinct societies, over which they preside, legitimate churches of Christ. By this assertion it will appear, that I entertain no lofty notions of the clerical office, as a mysterious distinction of a certain order of men. The pastors of primitive times were only the brethren of Christians. They possessed, they assumed no power. Their station was conferred upon them by the suffrages of the people; their influence arose from their characters, from the talents and the piety with which they were enabled to perform their spiritual functions. Neither Apostles nor Evangelists had successors; their extraordinary offices ceased with their lives; and the New Testament recognises only two classes of officers after Apostles and Evangelists had departed to the world of glory; these are denominated Bishops, i. e. overseers; and Deacons, i. e. servants. To persons accustomed to behold lofty cathedrals, episcopal palaces, and all the pompous retinue which await on him who possesses a mitred brow, the term Bishop is a most imposing sound: but in the New Testament, it refers to a simple man, surrounded by a number of individuals, who form themselves into a voluntary society, that they may mutually enjoy the ordinances of Christ, and who have appointed him to be their officiating minister. Deacons are personages of equally humble origin and pretensions. One or more of these are to

be found in such a society as I have described, and are only distinguished from their brethren by their superior talents, zeal, and piety, and by their managing, as trustees chosen by the body, their temporal affairs. In this view of the subject, Christianity fully manifests its character, as a religion of the heart, as being the choice of all who really deserve its name, and as distinguished by simplicity and spirituality. Thus it commends itself to every man as a reasonable service. Its institutions and its officers are such as we might naturally expect to originate from Jesus of Nazareth, and the unpretending fishermen of Gallilee. In an evil hour, pastors and churches suffered the idea of secular greatness and magnificence to captivate their minds. Worldly prosperity infected them with a worldly spirit; and after a lapse of centuries, bishops became princes, and churches principalities, over which they ruled with uncontrollable authority. Then the gold became dim, and the fine gold was changed. It was the interest of men so corrupted to dignify themselves, and mysteriously to attach to their persons, occult qualities suited to their newly assumed stations. Hence the notion of apostolic succession and delegated powers. Then the Scriptures were wrested to speak a language foreign to the simplicity of their meaning, and the writings of the first fathers suffered interpolation, to support the high pretensions of those who were preparing the throne for Antichrist, and who at length armed him with the prerogatives of Deity and the thunderbolts of heaven. Then the priestly office ceased to require per-

sonal qualifications or the suffrages of the church. The people became nothing, and the very name of church was transferred from them to the clergy. Thus originated the unscriptural notions on ordination, which are the bane and the disgrace of certain churches professedly reformed. They existed in full operation in the church of Rome, and were essential to the system of chicanery and delusion which that church found it expedient to maintain. In that church bishops claimed to be the successors in a lineal descent from the apostles, and assumed to themselves mysterious powers, which the apostles neither exercised nor professed. They, and they only, could make a priest; by the laying on of their hands they could convey the Holy Ghost, and every person *so* ordained by *them* became sacred. An indelible badge of peculiar dignity was put upon him, of which neither guilt, heresy, nor damnation itself could divest him. A priest once and for ever. The endowed church of our own country believes the same doctrine. Her ministers are not chosen by the people; personal piety, knowledge, and holy zeal, are not indispensable requisites to precede ordination; for it is often performed, where there is a total deficiency in them all, nay, where vice assumes its grossest and most scandalous forms. In order to invest with adventitious splendour diocesan episcopacy, even a reformed and Protestant church will maintain that its bishops are the descendants and successors of the apostles: to uphold this notion, it demands for them one of the prerogatives of God, and that this prerogative may be exercised, it makes

ordination an inexplicable something, unknown to Christianity, and repugnant to common sense. If the question be asked, whether the apostles appointed successors? and if the decision of the question be referred to scripture, it cannot be proved in the affirmative; on the contrary it is disproved by the whole tenor of the New Testament.

If it be again asked how the bishops of a church, which did not exist till the sixteenth century, and which was created by an act of the civil legislature, can be the lineal successors of the apostles? we find ourselves in a still greater perplexity. "They are forced to take refuge in the episcopal succession of the church of Rome, to avoid the charge of want of authority preferred against them by that church, and have no objection thus to become allied to him whom they denominate Antichrist; utterly unmindful of such puzzling enquiries as these, Whether in its transmission through so impure a channel, the succession might not be broken? Whether, when there were different pretenders to the chief see, each with apparently equal claims, amidst so much political strife, the legitimate head might not have been rejected, and the false one recognised? To be serious, can there be any idea much more revolting to the mind of one, who, with the New Testament in his hand, thinks for himself, than that Christ recognises the succession of bishops from the days of the apostles, as a succession of officers to whom he has entrusted the direction of affairs in his church, and to whom a man ought to look as the fountain of spiritual authority?" Before I believe this, I must burn

and forget my bible. But the farce of pretending to transform vice into virtue, and to make a man a priest who is almost a demon, or even of making a good man better, and a wise man wiser, by the words and hand of one of these authorized dignitaries, is perhaps more ridiculous than the fooleries we have already exposed. Ordination is neither a mystery, a sacrament, nor a conveyance of official power, and episcopal ordination, where the church neither votes nor recognises, is a nonentity. For the full disclosure and confirmation of the sentiments here advanced, I refer the inquiring reader to the Eclectic Review, from which several of these observations are borrowed, and I shall for the present take leave of the subject, with an admirable quotation from that valuable journal.*

"What could episcopal, or any other ordination, have imparted to such a minister as Doddridge? the sanctity of his principles, the validity of his ministrations, the usefulness of his labours, and the glory which awaited his retirement from the world in which he had lived only for its amendment, could have received no accession from the hands of bishops and pastors,

"Intaminatis fulget honoribus."

Can any statement be more gross, than that all persons ordained by a bishop are *ipse facto* made true

* I do not recollect any one article: but all the critiques which regard the controversy between churchmen and dissenters are by the hand of a master. It is much easier to rail at, than to answer them.

ministers of Christ? Can any thing make them ministers of Christ, who are utter strangers to his grace, void of Christian knowledge, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, profane, caring for no man's soul, and the companions of the unholy? who make a gain of godliness, and enter the church from the most degrading motives, that they may be supported by its revenues, while there exists within them a radical aversion to the function which they assume? Are these, we say, the true ministers of Christ? these the persons duly authorized to bring "man into a covenant of grace with his offended Maker," who are themselves enemies to God by wicked works? Can the mere repeating of a form of prayer, and the heartless reading of a hurried sermon, manifest the presence and ensure the grace of God to the attendants in a parish church, because these men have been episcopally ordained? No inconsiderable number of such persons remain, after the hands of the bishop have been laid upon them, 'in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' and go forth into the stations which money, or political influence, or family connexions have procured for them in the church, only to counteract the tendencies of the gospel, with the principles of which their whole lives are at variance, and to aid the triumphs of infidels and wicked men, as Judas, after he had received the sop, went out to finish his sin in the betraying of Christ. What does episcopal ordination convey? Does it convey genius, or talents, or piety, or wisdom, or spiritual gifts of any description, or aptness to teach? What are the advantages of episcopal or-

dination? Is it not passing strange, that we should be bidden to look at men as the successors of the apostles, who admit into the ministry persons destitute of Christian knowledge, uninfluenced by Christian principles, profane in their conversation, and notorious for the worldliness of their spirit, and the levity of their manners? And is it less amazing, that these persons should come as authorized ministers to congregations, who never sent for them, who do not even desire them?"

I have dwelt somewhat longer on this subject than perhaps strictly befits the leading object of my work. But churchmen, in writing the lives of churchmen, have set me the example, and I conceive, that whatever be the vehicle, the sentiments themselves are seasonable, and imperiously called for by the spirit of the hierarchy. The exploded and execrable doctrines of the divine right of kings, and the divine right of episcopacy, have experienced a revival and circulation in this enlightened age, that may well amaze and astound the friends of liberty and religion; and their loudest and most virulent abettors are to be found among those who affect a more scriptural faith, and a stricter non-conformity to the spirit and maxims of the world, than the rest of their clerical brethren.

It was the happiness of the church at Sheerness, to have a pastor ordained over them who possessed every gift and virtue required in the sacred function, and on whom ordination had nothing to confer. How zealously he laboured, how holily he lived, we may in some manner judge by the private papers

and letters, which were written by him during his residence at this place; a few extracts from which and his narrative shall close the chapter.

"Tuesday, October 20, 1795.—When I look back, and consider how little I have done for God, how little good I have done for my fellow creatures, and what little progress I have made in the divine life, I have great cause to be humbled and ashamed. Time I have had, opportunities have been presented to me, and privileges I have been surrounded with, yet how little have I improved them for the glory of my Divine Master; however I desire to be thankful that I have reason to believe the good work of his grace is begun in my heart. Lord quicken me to greater diligence. Let my heart burn with greater zeal and lively affection. Let Jesus be my portion and the strength and joy of my heart for ever and ever.

"Preached this evening at Sheerness, on Psalm xxii. 27, 28, and found some degree of liberty in speaking of the glories of my Divine Master. Preaching is heavy work without, but happy work with his smiles. O that I may enjoy more of his divine influence in my public ministrations, and be made useful to immortal souls.

"Wednesday, October 21.—Went this afternoon to Queenborough, and preached in the evening to my little flock there. I can truly say that I often find some pleasure in speaking at this place, and have reason to think that the Lord has work to do here. May I do all that I can to forward it by my prayers, example, and public labours. Lord help me to study

for the good of souls, to adopt every plan, and pursue every measure that I conceive will promote their eternal welfare. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy work, prepare me more for it, support me in it, and carry me through it with great success. Amen.

"Thursday, October 22.—Attended the prayer meeting this evening; did not find so much life and comfort as I have done sometimes, yet was a little affected on singing that sweet hymn, "Give me the wings of faith to rise," &c. Social prayer meetings are certainly commendable and profitable, and had we but more grace we should be more engaged in them. O may I ever love them and be happy while attending them.

"Friday, October 23.—Find it somewhat difficult to get texts and subjects to preach on, and am sometimes afraid I shall say all that I *can* say, and that I shall not be able to keep up any degree of variety. However let me study and preach the word, as God shall assist me. It is his work, and I must look to him alone for support in it. Support I have found in time past and why not in time to come.

"Note.—I think that a spiritual frame of mind and much prayer to God are the best methods, and most useful to find subjects, as well as to discourse on them. O Lord help me always to keep up correspondence with thee, and never let me sink into a state of stupor and coldness.

"Monday, October 26.—Drank tea at Rev. Mr. Shrubsole's with a few friends. Had some agreeable conversation with them. How pleasant is it to meet in friendship, and discourse with liberty, es-

pecially about the best things. May my tongue be as the pen of a ready writer, to set forth the excellencies of my dear Master. Let me talk more about him, and less about the vanities of this world.

"Wednesday, October 28.—Attended Church meeting; but few members present. Meetings of this kind are very useful to regulate the business of the church, but should always be carried on with much judgment, great love, and due consideration. Alas! how many congregations are there who observe no order or proper discipline, and never assemble to adopt plans for the welfare of the Church, nor meet to pray that God may prosper them. O Lord, grant that this Church, over which thou in thy providence hast placed me, may be remarkable for zeal, love, and devotion. Let us have a spirit of discernment, to do all things with discretion and wisdom, and a spirit of holiness to enable us to act for thy glory, and each other's good.

"Thursday, October 29.—Gave an exhortation this evening preparatory to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper next Sabbath day. O Lord, water the word, and bless our souls. May we feast on thy goodness, and ever remember thy great love in dying for us. Keep this in remembrance, O my soul, and be grateful.

"Yesterday I finished reading Mr. Romaine's Letters; they are savory, and the grand subject is Jesus. In this the author gloried, and by his writing appears as if he had been wholly taken up in the happy contemplation of his excellencies. May this little book be blessed to all who read it.

"Saturday, October 30.—I have been thinking this day of something to say for my Master to-morrow. How little am I able to enter into the spirit of divine subjects; how little impressed with a sense of the awfulness of my commission. How little do I study for the welfare of immortal souls. O Lord, make me all attention, action, and concern for their good. It is true that if I could present all the fire of hell to their nostrils, all the glories of heaven to their eyes, all the noise of damned souls to their ears, I could not convert them, yet it is my incumbent duty to make use of every mean, and do all that I can as an instrument for their benefit. Lord, it is thy work, bless me in it. Amen.

"Sabbath day, November 1.—This day for the first time I administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; though I felt some degree of tremor, yet was carried through it with comfort I trust to myself as well as to others. May the Lord grant that I may always find this a refreshing ordinance to my soul. In the afternoon preached from John xiv. 6, and in the evening from 2 Cor. viii. 9, and both times felt something of my Master's presence; on the whole it has been a delightful Sabbath to my soul. Jesus I trust has been my theme, and on him have I this day feasted. O precious bread of life, may I learn to live more upon thee, and thus find strength in my soul. I thank thee for this Sabbath, and may the word this day preached be blessed to the conversion and comfort of souls.

"Thursday, November 5.—This day finished reading Charnock on the Attributes of God. Must

confess it is an admirable book, and well worthy of the perusal of all who wish to gain information for the mind, or consolation for the heart. He is a nervous and useful writer, and abounds with originality of idea and strength of expression. As a specimen, I just set down the following sentence, when speaking of the power and unchangeableness of God he says, "what can make him change his purposes, who, if he please, can dash the earth against the heavens in the twinkling of an eye, untying the world from its centre, clap the stars and elements together into one mass, and blow the whole creation of men and devils into nothing." May the Lord grant that the truths I have therein read may be ever impressed upon my mind.

"Friday morning, November 6.—This morning early we were alarmed by a violent storm of wind; but have great reason to be thankful for preservation. A house near us had one end of it blown down; numbers of tiles from our house, and many others, were blown off. The frame of the new chapel at Queenborough, and the frame of a house opposite us blown down; a ship at the Nore dismasted, and much damage elsewhere it is to be feared was done. O Lord, what is the world and all things in it to thee, thou canst dash all to pieces in a moment with a breath. It is only for thee to speak the word, and elements shall rage, the earth reel to and fro, and all thy works of creation appear in confusion. Thou art indeed an awful God, but if thou art mine, then with joy shall I look up, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the pillars of

the world tremble. O Lord, may I have an interest in thy favour, I desire no more.

" Saturday, November 14.—Desire to be thankful for temporal mercies. What a mercy to have bread to eat, raiment to wear, and a habitation to dwell in! How many are destitute of these blessings, and know not what it is to have a friend to relieve, or any to sympathize with them.

" Note.—The best way I find to cure discontent and excite gratitude, is to consider how many there are in a worse situation than myself; may I look within, around, and be thankful.

" Monday, November 16.—Visited a man supposed to be at the point of death, whom I found so weak as hardly to be capable of speaking. Though I could not learn whether there was a work begun in his heart, or not, yet he seemed to acquiesce in all I said. Read a chapter and went to prayer. Much is to be learnt by visiting sick beds. Happy are they, who when brought to the confines of an eternal world, can say, that they are safely founded on the Rock of Ages. May this be the case with me in that awful hour.

" Note.—O my soul, often frequent death beds to learn what it is to die.

" Tuesday, November 17.—Read six sermons, preached in London at the formation of the Missionary Society. Found both pleasure and profit in the perusal of them; hope the intended plan of propagating the gospel in foreign parts will be carried into execution, and earnestly pray that the Lord may abundantly bless the labours of those who embark

in this noble cause. O that the happy period may soon arrive, when the kingdom of Jesus shall be established throughout the world; may his word have such powerful effect, that angels in heaven may exult and glory, that saints on earth may sing and rejoice, that devils in hell may fear and tremble. Amen.

"Thursday, November 26.—This day finished reading Boston's Crook in the Lot, it is an excellent piece, and well worthy the perusal of every afflicted Christian. He there shows we must all have a crook in our lot, let our situations be what they will in this world. O may I be resigned to the sovereign will and pleasure of my heavenly Master, and whatever crook I may have may it be sanctified by his blessing. Amen.

"Sabbath day, November 29.—Preached this morning and evening at Sheerness, and heard Mr. Shrubsole in the afternoon. Though I have had better Sabbaths, yet I desire to be thankful for this. Any help, the least comfort from my God, is more than I deserve. O for the happy period when I shall enter into the fulness of joy.

"Tuesday, December 1.—Heard Mr. Hill this evening, at our chapel, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A great many people attended, and it was, I believe, a most happy season, at least it was so to my own soul. O for more of these delightful opportunities. Spent the evening with him at Mr. Michel's, in, I trust, an agreeable and profitable manner.

"Wednesday, December 2.—Attended Church meeting. Two persons were proposed as members.

O that the Lord may go on to increase our number. I want to see a revival here. May many be stirred up to come and join themselves with us—hope there is a little prospect of it. Concluded in prayer, felt some little liberty. O for an enlarged heart at all times, when engaged in the service of God.

"Saturday, December 5.—Finished reading the first volume of Lambert's Sermons. Think him to be a tolerable composer, his language pleasing, his divisions just, and on the whole a useful writer. Happy for them who always keep the right end in view, and in preaching or writing, address the heart and conscience. This is the way, I believe, to do most good. May I ever adopt it.

"Tuesday, December 15.—Preached at Sheerness, on Heb. xii. 12, 13. My subject led me to speak of those who are weak in the faith; but, observed for their encouragement, that, as a man might be lame, as the text represents, and yet that would be no proof against his being a man, so the weakness of a Christian is no proof against his being a Christian. Spoke of the words in the following manner.

"1. A case supposed, Christian lame, weak, dejected, &c.

"2. Advice given, lift up the hands which hang down, &c.

"3. The argument used, lest that which is lame, &c.

"Though I found myself comfortable in meditating on the words, before I preached on them,

yet did not experience that liberty which I could have wished in speaking to the people. May the Lord grant, however, that good may be done.

"Sabbath-day, December 20.—Preached three times at Sheerness, in the morning from Cant. v. 2, 6. In the afternoon from 1 John v. 20. And in the evening from Isa. lii. 3. Was this day much encouraged, by hearing of one being brought to the knowledge of the truth, under my ministry in this place, for which I desire to be exceedingly thankful. It has been often matter of grief to me, that I could not see any fruits of my labours here. O that this instance may be a stimulus to excite me to go on in the work. Thou, Lord, knowest that it is my sincere desire to bring souls to thee, for that end therefore do thou enable me to pray, and labour much that I may be blessed in the work.

"Thursday evening.—Mr. Shrubsole gave the exhortation, preparatory to the Lord's supper next sabbath. The words he chose were these, "Be cloth-ed with humility." Made some useful remarks which I pray may be fixed on all our minds. This is the last day of the year. O how little have I done for God and immortal souls. How little have I improved the time, and what little progress I have made in knowledge, love, humility, and every grace, yet, I would bless God that he hath not given me up to my own corruptions, nor suffered me to go astray from him. In regard to the church, with which I am connected, on a review of things from the time I first came, have every reason to think that matters are in much better order than then, as

the ordinances are regularly administered, seats let, and members admitted, and good done. May the Lord go on to prosper the church, and may I do all I can to promote the welfare thereof. Lord make bare thine arm, and cause thy word to take deep root in every heart.

"Friday, January 1, 1796.—This is a memorable day; my dear wife was delivered of a son, about a quarter before eight o'clock this evening. Never did I feel so much by sympathy before, but desire to be thankful for this safe deliverance. O Lord, remember this child; should he live, let him live for thee.* May he be thine in every sense, a partaker of grace here, and eternal glory hereafter.

"Thursday, Jan. 14.—Attended the prayer meeting this evening. Though my mind was very wandering before I engaged in prayer, yet hope it was a profitable season. In general I find as much, if not more liberty in prayer on these occasions, as I do when engaged in the more public service on Lord's day. This I would take as an encouragement to go on, for I sometimes think that I shall have little or no matter, or variety in my addresses to the throne. But the Lord often disappoints me in this.

"Note.—Never be afraid of praying too much. A warm heart and often exercise will teach me to pray *well.*

"Tuesday, January 26.—Finished reading the second volume of Milner's Ecclesiastical History. He

* This prayer is answered. Mr. C. Buck is devoting himself to the ministry, and is pursuing a course of studies at Oxford.

appears to be a sensible writer, but I cannot coincide with him in all his opinions. His chapter on ecclesiastical establishments, seems to me weak and contradictory. Declares that he wishes the notion of particular redemption were not so common among the moderns. He also says, that separation from the church of England is wrong, except in cases of total corruption. What can I think of such a writer as this, who really speaks little better than error to espouse his own cause? O that corruption, total or partial, may ever be abhorred by me.

"Tuesday, February 2.—Heard Mr. Slatterie, from Matt. xvii. 5. He made some remarks on the much controverted subject, the eternal generation of the Son of God; said, that the expression meant no more than the only begotten, &c. and that he believed him to be the Son of God, as to his divine nature.

"He afterwards baptized my son Charles. O that this dedication of him to God, may be followed with a divine blessing. Dear Lord, look upon him and bless him. I sincerely and solemnly give him up to thee. Should he live, may he live to thee; and may I, and my dear wife, be enabled to do our duty towards him as parents, to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Amen. Amen.

"Saturday, February 13.—Finished the perusal of Dr. Hawker's Sermons on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost. His language is rather florid, his style neat and tolerably correct. His arguments he draws chiefly from the scriptures, and declares that he disclaims all testimony but that of

scripture. "In my esteem," says he, "it is not only an unnecessary service to aim at strengthening by secondary arguments the prime proofs of holy writ; but it is forming an alloy, and that of the basest kind, to mingle human opinions with divine truths. The sacred book of God can need no collateral testimony from man." On the whole, this is a useful publication, well meant, and well written, and I pray God it may be much blessed.

"Thursday, February 18.—Read the Life and Conversion of a Thomas Bennet. By his own account he was a swearer, liar, thief, &c. was cast for transportation, but remained in prison for seven years, where the Lord began to work upon his mind; here it seems he was useful in the conversion of others. He insists upon it that the king is in darkness, and walketh therein, or he would not suffer the bishops and clergy to teach who never knew God; and observes, that the wrath of the Lord is against the king for this. In speaking of his being born again, which he says was on the fourth of June, he says that his conversion was on that day in answer to prayer. He draws the comparison between the king's birth-day and his spiritual, thus,—'O king George, you never knew such a birth-day as this. Your's was of the world, O king, but mine was from above; your's was natural, but mine spiritual; men rejoice at thy birth-day, but angels at mine, &c. Thus, O king,' says he, 'my birth-day is grander than thine, and is attended with better guests and with better harmony than thine.' What good end is answered in writing thus, I am at a loss to know.

He seems also to speak against many brought up in dissenting academies; says 'he found great comfort in reading Huntingdon's Bank of Faith, Whitefield's Journal, Romaine's Life of Faith; and declares that he was made useful on board the hulks at Woolwich, &c. &c.' If the account be genuine which he gives of himself, there are some things which seem to be rather singular and wonderful; but there are many others which rather betray enthusiasm and self-conceit; at least it appears so to me.

"May, 1796.—Read the diary of Mrs. Arabella Davies. She appears to have been one taught of God, and though often depressed, yet she enjoyed much of her Master's presence. O that I, like her, may never be satisfied with any thing short of the smiles of my God. I find the perusal of lives and diaries profitable, as I therein see something of my own experience in the case of others, yet would lament that I feel so little gratitude to God for his distinguishing grace towards any of his creatures, in calling them to the knowledge and enjoyment of the truth.

"May 6.—Have reason to be thankful lately for a temporal supply. How good is God to grant me enough by the way, and I hope everlasting glory in the end. O that my heart were but more affected with a view of the many mercies I have received, and that I could but anticipate more the crown I hope to enjoy in the world above. Gracious God, raise me above all sublunary things, and fix my heart on thee.

"Tuesday, September 13.—This day finished the

reading of Palmer's Nonconformist's Memorial. Can say I have read it both with pleasure and profit, though I have to lament that I am so far behind those illustrious worthies. They were indeed men of knowledge, piety, and of a tender conscience. Rather than conform to what they supposed to be inconsistent, they left their situations, and cheerfully bore the difficulties they were called to undergo. O Lord give me the same spirit; give me a clean conscience, that I may have a comfortable one.

" Saturday evening, October 1.—Have reason to lament that my mind is so little engaged in and conversant with spiritual things. How do worldly objects take up my attention, and how seldom can I view the solemn realities of the world to come; yet, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, and that it is my earnest desire to enjoy more of thee while in the present state. My heart indeed is sluggish, my thoughts wavering; but yet I wish, earnestly wish, to be more assimilated to thy likeness. O gracious Redeemer, quicken my soul, let me feel the influences of thy Spirit more; draw me that I may run after thee; let the vanities and things of this world have no impression on my mind; open the gates of bliss to my soul, that I may experience intercourse with thee, for here centres my felicity; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation, and I shall be happy; O bring me, bring me nearer to thyself.

" Thy only love, may I require
Nothing on earth beneath desire,
Nothing in heaven above.

Let earth and all its trifles go,
Give me, O Lord, thy love to know,
Give me thy precious love."

"Tuesday, October 11.—Two years have expired this day since I first came to this place. How swiftly the time flies, and how little improved. Hope my labours, however, on the whole have not been fruitless, either in the way of conversion or building up; I have certainly found many happy seasons in dispensing his word here, though I have met with difficulties and trials by the way; but it would not do to be without some troubles, I know when sanctified they make me pray more earnestly, preach more experimentally, and live more consistently. But now, O Lord, I raise my Ebenezer, would look back with thankfulness, and look forward with dependance. Should nothing transpire to remove me from this place, grant that my usefulness among the people may be more extensive, my humility more conspicuous, and my heart more diligently engaged in the sacred service.

"Tuesday, October 18.—Finished reading Fuller's Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared as to their Moral Tendency, in which, I think, he evidently proves the Calvinistic system to be superior as to the tendency to convert profligates, professed unbelievers, to promote morality, love to God, candour and benevolence to men, humility, charity, love to Christ, veneration for the scriptures, happiness, gratitude, obedience, and heavenly mindedness. His principal antagonist seems to be Dr. Priestley, whose arguments he easily confutes. His

manner of writing is plain, tolerably correct, with very few exceptionable expressions. I read it with pleasure as well as profit. Such a piece seems to be calculated to do good, especially among those whose faith is weak, and whose minds may sometimes be a little hurt by a transient reflection on the Socinian scheme.

"Thursday, October 20.—Attended Prayer Meeting this evening, but know not when I enjoyed it so little. O Lord, forgive my insensibility and carelessness of heart. Refused engaging in prayer, nor did I hear others pray with any comfort. O for the happy season when I shall never be indisposed as to spiritual things, when my heart shall be always animated, and my tongue incessantly engaged in celebrating the praises of my God. Met with something that hurt my mind; but why should not I be sorely tried as well as other ministers? O Lord, sanctify it to me, and I shall bear it without complaint. Learn, O my soul, that ministers have trials which other people have not, but remember also it is more needful for them than for others.

"Friday, October 21.—Have been somewhat indisposed in body and mind this day, so that I have not had my usual relish for reading, studying, &c. as at other times. What a strange creature am I, how easily disordered, how soon dejected: but, thanks be to God, his faithfulness, his power, his goodness, are the same. O for a clearer view, richer experience, a more copious enjoyment of His love. My God, bless me *with* thy smiles, and I will bless thee *for* them.

" Saturday, October 22.—Know not when I have been so distressed for subjects and texts to preach on to-morrow. After considering several passages, could not fix upon any. Left it, therefore, until this evening, when I attempted again, but could not immediately find any text; at last I was delivered from my distress, and found two, which I was enabled to fix upon and study. In general I am not much embarrassed in finding subjects: but perhaps this trial to-day is to humble, and to teach me that I can do nothing without my God, that my studies, as well as my preaching, ought to be under his regulation, and that I should make them more a matter of prayer. O Lord, then as I believe thou hast called me to the work, furnish me with matter, give me suitable texts, and help me to be more dependent on thee for thy assistance and blessing.

" Sabbath-day, October 23.—Preached this morning, with liberty, from Jer. ii. 13. The word, I trust, was profitable to others. Preached in the afternoon, from John viii. 11. And in the evening preached at Queenborough, from Rom. ii. 9, 10. Thank God for this day, and for the support I have had in the work. O let the word take deep root in every heart. O my God, make me useful.

" Wednesday, October 26.—Finished reading Kearsley's Abridgment of Cooke's Voyages round the World. They are entertaining, but, alas! how little of God, of Providence in them. No putting themselves under his protection; no real gratitude discovered for deliverances; no spiritual observations on the wonders of the great deep; no profit-

able descant on the various works of the Almighty Creator, as they appear in different parts of the world. What an amazing field would have opened to a serious mind, and how would the praises and wisdom of God be advanced by spiritual observations made on his astonishing works. O Lord, give me a mind that shall see and enjoy thee in all things, that I may be led with the Psalmist to say, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all."

"Saturday, October 29.—Cannot help thinking how little I improve my time. I am fond of reading and being in my study, and yet seem to do but little to any good purpose. How many profitable things have I forgotten. How many things that ought to have made an impression on my mind, scarcely hath left a trace behind. How many remarks which afforded pleasure in the reading of them, now cannot be recollected! Lord, strengthen my memory, ripen my judgment, enlarge my understanding, and above all bless me with a gracious heart, and such impressions of thy love which shall never wear off. Indeed this is of the greatest consequence, for the time will come when the brightest intellectual powers must fail; but if thy grace be shed abroad in the heart, this shall live, and rise superior to all; yea, when every thing decays, this shall increase and shine. Lord, give me therefore thyself, may I study to know and please thee here, and at last be received into the enjoyment of that rest which thou hast prepared for all them that love thee.

"Sabbath, January 1, 1797.—Being New-year's day, I preached in the morning, from 1 Sam. vii. 12. and in the evening to young people, from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. A great many attended and appeared attentive.

"Tuesday, January 3.—Attended Mr. Bishop's funeral to Minster, and preached in the evening, from Psalm xc. 12. Lord, teach me to number my days, make me a proficient in this profitable arithmetic, and may I apply my heart unto wisdom, even heavenly wisdom, which is the principal thing, and every way profitable to direct, that I may say with one,

> "My soul would learn the heavenly art
> To improve the hours I have,
> That I may act the wiser part,
> And live beyond the grave." WATTS.

"Miserable place as this world is, and sometimes appears to me, yet, through mercy I find some comforts in it, though not from it. I find great pleasure at times in reading, in studying, in friendship, in my dear children, in conversation, in preaching, in contemplation, in hearing, in reflecting on past seasons, &c. in praying. So that were I to complain, I should be guilty of irrationality, or were I unmindful of such favours, I should justly criminate myself of ingratitude. This I write September 26, 1797.

"Sabbath-day, November 5.—Heard this day of one, who, I trust, received his first and saving impressions under my ministry at Silver Street Cha-

pel some time since. He had since gone to sea, and thought but little of it. He inquired for my name at the time, and never forgot it, and said Mr. Buck's religion, or what he preached, was what he liked. Died very happy, and gave evident testimony that the Lord was with him. One of his last expressions was, "I take my cable, and fix it on my anchor, Jesus, and go through the storm," or words to that effect. The landlord of the house, I understand, was also converted by listening (at the door) to what was said by the attendants of this man in his illness. Here is matter of great praise and joy, and peculiar encouragement to myself as a minister of the gospel, to go on in the work. How long is it sometimes before ministers hear of their word being blessed, and some never hear until they get to heaven. However let me consider what an honour it is to be employed for God, and to be made useful by him. Methinks I had rather be a minister of the gospel, to bring souls to Christ, than the greatest monarch in the world. O Lord, bless me in the delightful work, and whether I know my usefulness or not, may I go on sowing the seed.

"Saturday evening, December 30.—God has been very gracious unto me this year, both in temporals and spirituals, for which I desire to be thankful. He has heard and answered my prayers wonderfully, and I would here mark it down as a memorandum, that I have hardly ever prayed for any thing, but what God has given it to me. O that this may encourage me to go on praying. Lord Jesus bind my heart to thee. Let my soul, my body, pow-

ers, circumstances, family, yea, all be under thy direction and guidance. Amen.

No. XLI.

To Mrs. B. Banbury, Oxfordshire.

"Sheerness, Nov. 22, 1794

"Dear Friend—I was sorry I was not in the way to see Mr. Barnes when he was in town, as I should have deemed myself happy to have had an interview with him. Your kindness to me when at Banbury demands my grateful acknowledgments and sincere regard; and I assure you, distance of place doth not erase you from my memory. Could I have staid there consistent with my own comfort, I believe I should not have left you, but I saw no probability of it, though there were many whose attachment and kindness I shall not easily forget. How you have gone on since, I have not heard, but hope that peace and unanimity have universally prevailed, and that the word of the Lord hath run and been glorified. You, I trust, have found the pearl of great price, and now experience the efficacy of that religion you profess in your own heart. To be a professor is a very easy thing; but to be a real Christian is no small matter. To stand against all the allurements and temptations of sin, and all the enticements and oppositions of the world, is what no one can do but those who are enabled by a divine power. We see how many there are who can talk about

religion; but it is only the true believer that can walk according to it. It is only he that can adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. Happy then is such a character who loves his God above all earthly things, and who can say in the sincerity of his soul, "whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee. Thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." O that you and I may ever consider it as our privilege, our duty, and happiness to devote ourselves to his glory, and give ourselves up to his service. And now let me give my friends a word of advice, for indeed I wish well to your immortal souls. Let me exhort you to be determined in the strength of the Lord, to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Keep a watchful eye against the many snares, that the world and Satan lay for you, and earnestly pray to the Lord that he may guide you into all truth, keep you from sin, and give you grace to hold out to the end. You are sensible that nothing but his blood can atone for sin, that nothing but his grace can justify the soul, and his spirit warm and animate the heart. Depend upon him then, read his sacred word, attend his ordinances, and run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. That this may be your happy case is the sincere prayer of,

"Your unworthy, but willing servant,

"C. B."

No. XLII.

" Sheerness, Dec. 3, 1794.

" Dear Friend—The recent dispensation of Providence with which you have been exercised, excites me to send you a few lines, for though distant from you, I cannot help thinking of the distressing situation and heavy trial which the Lord hath been pleased you should meet with, yet I hope not so heavy but what he hath supported you under it, not so distressing, but what he hath administered some consolation in it! For you to feel, and that very considerably, on such an occasion, is the peculiar mark of tender parents. Indeed the trial is great; the flower of youth was just beginning to unfold itself, and the blossom began to shed a sweet fragrance. Amiable, pleasant, and delightful to all around; there your affections centred; there your hopes were fixed; and often with fond pleasure did you look upon the rising youth, and thought again and again what comfort he would be to you in succeeding years. But lo! a worm at the root. The tender bud nipped, and at once brought to the house appointed for all living. Thus we see all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But I am almost ready to accuse myself of cruelty, for opening the wounds afresh, and bringing before you the object which you have deposited in the silent grave. But, however, I cannot help observing, that as you had every reason to believe he was one whom the Lord loved, that this should be

a source of consolation in the midst of all. Taken from the allurements of the world and the enticements of sin, he is no more exposed to danger. You will now have no anxious fears about his prosperity in this world, no distressing thoughts about the difficulties he might meet with here. Is it not an unspeakable blessing to him, though a sore affliction to you, that he is so soon taken away from the evil to come. Nature, I know, must feel, and that very sensibly too; however, let grace reign. Sorrow not as those without hope; but look forward to that blissful period, when you shall meet again. O what pleasure will it be to meet those whom we loved here on earth, and never, no never to be separated from them. Happy hour, when *we* shall be called away from all terrestrial things, to the enjoyment not only of our dear friends gone before, but our best and dearest friend, Jesus Christ. There we shall see his face, celebrate his praises, admire his wisdom, adore his goodness, and be transported with his love for ever and ever. O, may we be there, is my earnest prayer. I now remain, my dear friends,

"Your unworthy servant,

"C. B."

No. XLIII.

"Sheerness, Dec. 6, 1794.

"I am happy that you have complied with my request as to the time of writing to each other. I hope the time will not be lost, and I am sure it will

not if religion be our main theme. What subject so noble, so sublime, so useful, either to write or converse about. Other subjects may have something pleasing; but this affords entertainment and profit connected, because it is that which hath relation to the grand and immortal part, the soul. However infidels may reject it on the one hand, and sceptics doubt of its truth on the other, yet happy are we in experiencing its power and tasting its sweetness. Surely it is not a mere chimera, a delusory charm, or false impression; but a solid, permanent, influential principle. It brings its own internal witness with it, which, though it be denied by the voice, cannot be destroyed by the power of the ignorant and wicked man. I grant that what you and I may feel, will not do to convince others without external evidence, but it will do to support and animate our own souls. And thousands, whose intellectual powers were never very strong to reason upon the subject, have submitted to racks, tortures, pains, flames, and death, merely from what they have felt. Religion then is an inward, potent principle, or it is that which hath its seat in the heart, and is attended with lively affection after God, enjoyment of him, and impartial obedience to him. And herein we may distinguish it from the religion of the fancy, if I may so speak,or that which is merely mechanical. Some, when they hear a lively minister upon any pathetic subject, are greatly moved for a while; perhaps it may be the suffering of Christ. The minister describes it with all the powers of oratory, and sets it forth with the most affecting language, the fancy

begins to paint out every scene, the passions are agitated, and the person goes away exclaiming, What an excellent minister, and what benefit he has received; while, alas! his judgment is not at all informed, nor his life at all amended. Thus many deceive themselves, and think they are something when they are nothing. But how different it is with the real Christian. We do not say but what his affections are often moved; but then his religion is not built upon the fluctuating basis of his passions. No; it hath its place in the heart, and its effect is evident on the life. And this exactly corresponds with the declarations of Jehovah, in respect to his people. He does not *barely* say he will communicate knowledge to the mind, or make impressions upon the understanding, that he will place before them the beauties of creation, the wonders of providence and redeeming grace, in order that these may affect the mind. He goes farther, and is determinate, for he says, "I will give them an heart to know me." Jer. xxiv. 7. And, indeed, without this, every thing beside would be abortive. But here it rests, "My people shall be made willing in the day of my power." May this word have its accomplishment on us, is my earnest prayer. My paper forbids my enlarging, must therefore conclude,

"And remain, &c.

"C. B."

No. XLIV.

Mrs. Keigwin.

" Sheerness, December 11, 1794.

" Dear Sister,—In your last letter you gave me some little account of the exercises of your mind. You say, that of all your foes, there is none so formidable as unbelief. Indeed nothing is so injurious to the mind, so derogatory to the glory of God, and so destructive to our comfort, as this: it is a corrupt weed, hath its growth in a bad soil, and is congenial to human depravity. I grant that there may be no impropriety in disbelieving, when there is not proper evidence, yea, we are not obliged to believe in any one, or any thing without it. The criminality of unbelief, therefore, arises in proportion to the fulness of the evidence of the truth we profess to believe in. Now, I suppose, the unbelief with which you are attacked is of this nature. You do not disbelieve the existence of Deity, the harmony of his perfections, and the revelation of his will, which he hath given to mankind in his word. No, the case is this; you are convinced of the great depravity of your heart, you are led to see what a sinner, what a backslider you have been, you view sin as an enormous evil, and you feel it as an intolerable burden. In this situation you are almost ready to conclude, that because God is infinitely glorious and holy, and you such a depraved unworthy creature, that, therefore, you are not, and never will be, the object of his love, and the subject of his grace. Thus unbelief influ-

ences and distresses, while it dictates the painful language, "The mercy of the Lord is clean gone for ever." This is, I suppose, in a great measure your case. Is it not? If it be not, I will not deceive you. But if it be, then I would endeavour to say a word by way of strengthening your weak hands, and encouraging you against this potent enemy with which you have to grapple. And, first, then remember that you are not alone in this conflict. Many who have not the opportunity of conversing with others, are ready to think that no one is subject to the temptations and trials they are; but if you were to know what passes in my mind, and the dreadful fits of unbelief I am sometimes in, you would no longer wonder at yourself; and, indeed, many with whom I have had the opportunity to converse, confess that they have been exposed to the most powerful attacks of unbelief, which have been cause of great grief to them: but, as the bare recollection that others have been in the same situation with yourself, will not deliver you from it, I would proceed further to advise you, to search for the evidences of God's regard to those who are made sensible of their sin, and desire to cleave to Him only; and here we will produce only one, "Unto this man will I look, even unto him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isaiah lxvi. 2. Here then, if you answer this description, you may rest. Here is solid basis. Here is firm footing. Here is a declaration from the very God against whom you have sinned. Here is sufficient evidence to convince you (if applied by the Spirit) that however vile you have

been, the Lord is willing to receive you. Is it lawful then to doubt Him who is ever true; is it right, after viewing such a declaration of his will, to keep back and exclude ourselves from his mercy, when he hath not done it. Certainly not. Go to him then just as you are, and say, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Here stand fast, and never give up till he shall be pleased to give you that faith which shall bring glory to God, and comfort to yourself. Wishing you much of his presence, I conclude, and remain,

"Your affectionate brother and servant,

"C. B."

No. XLV.

Rev. T. Wills.

"Sheerness, Kent, December 23, 1794.

"My Dear Sir,—Some time ago I received your letter, and thank you for the hint you dropped, lest any thing should happen of that nature you mention. I am glad you are able to go through your stated work again with any degree of facility. I hope the Lord will go on to restore your wonted health, that your animal frame may be strengthened, and above all that you may enjoy the blessing of Him, in the light of whose countenance is life, and whose favour is as the cloud of the latter rain. If he be with us, all will be well, whether we are in health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, life or death; but without him we can do nothing, enjoy nothing, or say no-

thing to any good purpose. The most abject situation is pleasant when he smiles, the most elevated, miserable when he frowns. We are ready to sink under the smallest trial, destitute of his presence; but we can rejoice in the greatest, when he communicates to us his grace. Happy are those who see themselves weak, that Christ may strengthen them, that feel themselves as nothing, that Christ may be all and in all unto them. Such will be able to discern his wisdom in all the dispensations of his providence, and admire his wonderful love and unmerited kindness in the work of redemption, while they are enabled to be submissive and patient in every trial, happy and composed in every difficulty, thankful for every cross as well as for every comfort, and at last go off triumphantly to the world of glory above.

"My kind respects, if you please, to Mrs. Wills and Miss Thornhill, hope they are well.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your willing and humble servant,

"C. B."

No. XLVI.

Mr. Atkins.

"Sheerness, Kent, April 25, 1795.

"I was much disappointed in not seeing you at our friend's, Mr. Mayhew, the Thursday before I left town I was so much hurried that I had not time to call upon you. Mrs. Mayhew informed me you

were much indisposed in body, I hope this will find you perfectly recovered, and likewise happy in the enjoyment of that prosperity of soul which is infinitely preferable to health of body. We ought to be thankful for either, but if we enjoy both together, we ought to be peculiarly grateful, as these afford the most solid and refined satisfaction mortal creatures can experience while in this vale of tears. But, however, these do not always attend each other. Many have strong and healthy bodies, while their precious and immortal souls are in the most miserable and awful state, while on the other hand, many whose animal frames are weak and tottering upon the borders of the grave, have souls in the most prosperous condition, all alive to God, enjoying the delightful and benign presence of Him, whose prerogative alone it is to make his people comfortable, either in body or soul. I hope my dear friend knows what it is to enjoy communion with Him. Many are the years you have sat under the sound of the everlasting gospel, and many the moments you have experienced the love of God sensibly shed abroad in your heart. You can bear a testimony no doubt to this truth, that nothing is so pleasant as to live a life of dependance upon God, a life of fellowship with him, and a life of obedience to him. This indeed, can only make us happy in life, and yield us consolation in that hour when we shall take leave of all terrene objects, and resign our earthly tabernacles to the silent grave.

"Last Sabbath-day I preached at a place called Town Sutton, near where Mr. Gambier preaches.

It is quite a new interest, and a pleasing prospect of usefulness. I believe much good may be done in such country places, were there but faithful laborious ministers, who would consider it as their duty and honour to go forth and preach the glad tidings of the gospel of peace to poor sinners. I am going this week, God willing, to preach at another place where there is a desire to hear. Let me have an interest in your prayers, that my stated labours at home, and occasional labours elsewhere, may be blessed to the good and conversion of many souls, that I may not have reason to say, that I have laboured in vain, or spent my strength for nought. I assure you, you are not forgotten by me. May the blessing of the Lord be with and upon you, is the earnest prayer of

"Your affectionate friend and servant,

"C. B."

No. XLVII.

Rev. M. Castledon.

"Sheerness, May 22, 1795.

"Dear Friend—This week I have been to Chatham, to the ordination of our friend Slatterie. Mr. Leggett, of Stroud, began the service with reading and prayer; Mr. Brooksbank then said a few words, and required the confession of faith, without asking the usual questions; Mr. Simpson prayed the ordination prayer, and gave the charge; Mr. Shrubsole concluded with prayer; and Mr. Hill preached in

the evening. There were many people, and I believe it was a profitable opportunity, at least it was to me. Slatterie's confession, I think, was not a bad one, as I did not observe that he omitted any of the principal articles that should be brought forward on such an occasion. Mr. Simpson's ordination prayer, I think, was one of the best I ever heard, he seemed much affected, and prayed with great earnestness; he delivered some good things in his charge, which I hope I shall not forget; his text was 2 Tim. iv. 1 to 5, inclusive. Mr. Hill's sermon to the people in the evening was a curious one. It was rather a sermon *ad clerum*, than a sermon *ad populum*. His text was 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. He said many excellent things, but was not so solid and so much to the point as he should have been on such an occasion; but, you know, *he* can take liberties which others *must not*.

" I think ordinations, when conducted with propriety, are awful, yet profitable seasons. What can be more solemn, than to see a person set apart for the arduous work of preaching the everlasting gospel, in which, if he be not faithful, circumspect, and consistent, what dreadful consequences will follow: yet, what more delightful, than to see a man void of all sordid and base motives on the one hand, and regardless of all human applause or reproach on the other, willingly giving himself up in the presence of God, angels, and men, to the difficult, yet honourable service of the gospel ministry! O that we may be so kept by the power, and so directed by the grace of our God, as ever to keep his glory in view, and rejoice in the happy prospect of doing good to im-

mortal souls. Whatever others do, let it be our aim to study hard, pray hard, and labour hard for the good of our fellow creatures. I think we shall not have to complain on our dying day that we have done too much for him who hath done so much for us; but, in all probability, we shall have to regret that we have done so little. Let us not be discouraged if we meet with difficulties in the way. They will be all needful, and will not make us preach the worse, but the better. If our hearts be but in the work, we may hope we shall have comfort in it also; for, as Baxter well observes,* 'God seldom blesses any man's work so much as his, whose heart is set upon the success of it.' May we be made faithful, laborious, and active ministers of the New Testament, and be preserved from every snare, are my sincere prayers.

"I remain your's sincerely in the gospel,

"C. B."

No. XLVIII.

"Sheerness, June 27, 1795.

"Dear Friend—Your's of the 17th instant I received, and thank you for the intelligence you have given me respecting the exhibition of the Hoxton students. I am sorry to hear that Mr. Foster is in such an alarming situation, and should have been more so, had I lived in town, as I should have attended his ministry while he lived, as I have done

* Baxter's Reformed Pastor.

in time past. I know not of any minister in London who has been made so useful to me as he. Though I never considered him as one who posessed any peculiar brightness of intellect, or strength of thought, yet the faithful, simple, and experimental manner of discussing his subject, always pleased and profited me. Almost eight years ago, I heard him preach at St. Antholin's, on the same text as you mention, but he treated it differently to what you heard him at Long Acre. Should he be spared a little longer, I hope to have the pleasure to hear him again, as I expect to be in town in August next, God willing. You say nothing in your last of your settling at Deal, but by your returning again I suppose you intend it. If so, I hope and pray that the Lord may make you the honoured instrument of reviving the work in that place, and will give you a word of advice, if you will take it from a younger brother, and that is, be much in secret prayer and habituate yourself to study, reading, &c. I find that these things must be attended to, or a variety cannot be kept up with any degree of life and power. There is a great deal to do in a stated congregation, and it needs much communion with God, and knowledge of divine things, in order to acquit ourselves with propriety. Study hard, and pray often, therefore, in private, that you may be owned of God, and remarkably blessed in your labours in public. I would also have you pay some attention to village preaching, if you can: much good is done this way, both to ministers and people. I have two little places here that I occasionally

preach at, and sometimes am able to speak with a kind of liberty or freedom which I cannot always do in large places. The simplicity of the people excites a minister to speak plainly and simply, and by this means the Lord is often pleased to work upon the hearts and open the eyes of poor sinners.

"You heard, I suppose, that the Independent Ministers of the county of Kent held their association at Strood, the tenth of this month. The ministers were, Mr. Townsend, of Ramsgate; Mr. Ralph, of Maidstone; Mr. Leggett, of Strood; Mr. Cratchrode, of Gravesend; Mr. Hopkins, of Tunbridge; Mr. Muston, of Aston Berks; Mr. Slatterie, of Chatham; Mr. Beaufoy, of Town Sutton; Mr. Goodwin, of Lenheim; and myself. I preached from 2 Tim. i. 12., on the preceding evening. Mr. Ralph preached in the morning on adoption, (and what is singular to relate, he began his sermon, divided his subject, and finished it, and absolutely forgot to give out his text, which we found was, 1 John iii. 1.) Mr. Townsend preached in the evening on justification, from Rom. v. 18. "Justification of life." On the whole it was a comfortable day, and I hope productive of good. It was resolved, among other things, that a letter should be drawn up and sent to the ministers and congregations in Kent, to excite them to come forward to countenance the design of propagating the gospel in foreign parts; a copy of which letter I suppose you have received by this time; but I will not now enlarge on this business, as, perhaps, you either have heard, or will hear more of it, most likely, from

Mr. Townsend, when you see him. Hoping you are well in body, and happy in mind, I now remain,

" Your's, in the best bonds,
" C. B."

No. XLIX.

Mr. Boulton.

" Sheerness, November 19, 1795.

My dear Friend——Hope this will find you well, enjoying every blessing peculiar to those who belong to the family of heaven, and living near to him who died for you. This is the first question I ask concerning you, because I know it is that which not only should, but I believe is of the greatest importance in your estimation. And, my dear friend, what is so much to be desired by a child of God as prosperity of soul. Health of body, increase of knowledge, success in business, advancement in reputation in the world are comparatively nothing to the welfare of the immortal part. To be increasing in health of mind, gaining spiritual knowledge, succeeding in heavenly business, and rising in reputation in the eyes of angels and saints; these acquirements to the true Christian are of the greatest moment, while he anxiously desires that he may not fall short of them; and happy, truly happy is he who is so insensible to all terrestrial things as to make these the constant objects of his pursuit. Such experience that peace in their consciences, that

happiness in their minds, which the attainment of all other things could not produce. What a privilege then if we have any disposition to seek after these nobler objects. What a mercy that our footsteps are directed into this delightful path. O let us be thankful to Him who is the author of all our blessings, while we constantly look to and depend upon him that he may grant us the continuance of these favours, that our hearts may burn with greater zeal, be fired with more ardent love, and our affections be taken from all worldly things and placed above, even on Him who hath made us so deeply indebted to Him.

" I know not how it has been in your part, but here we have had very high winds lately. We have reason to be thankful however for preservation. How easily can the Almighty dash every thing to pieces! All the world to him is no more than an atom to us! But happy for us in all the awful displays of his power, if we can put our trust under the shadow of his wings. May we be his, and all shall work together for our advantage and felicity. I must now conclude, wishing you the best of blessings.

" I remain, dear friend,

" Your's very affectionately,

" C. B."

No. L.

Mr. Atkins.

"Sheerness, December 1, 1795.

"My dear Friend—Though absent from, yet I cannot forget you; and as a proof of it I take up my pen to write you a few lines, which I hope will find you in the perfect enjoyment of bodily and spiritual health. Through mercy we remain well, though many in this part have been visited with sickness. How were you in the late high winds? our house was shaken much. Great damage was done here, especially among the shipping. The frame of our little chapel at Queenborough which was not covered in was completely blown off the foundation, and much injured, but however we expect soon to get it up again, but cannot tell exactly the time when it will be ready for opening. I anticipate much in regard to the work of the Lord there. Great things have been done already, and what may we not expect when we have a proper place fitted up, when many we hope will go, who will not be seen at our present place. O that the Lord may make bare his arm, and cause his report to be believed, that his word may have free course, run and be glorified. When I consider the usefulness of a Romaine, a Berridge, and many other illustrious characters, it excites in me a strong desire to go and do likewise; and though I ever expect to be totally insignificant when compared to them, yet would I consider it as an honour, as one says, 'even to be an errand boy

for Christ.' To be useful to the souls of our fellow creatures in any way, is doing them the greatest service. To heal the disorders of the body, to relieve the distresses of the indigent, to compassionate the feelings of the miserable, to console the minds of the afflicted, are indeed praiseworthy actions; but to be made an instrument of good to the immortal soul is far more so: " as we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, ever remembering this truth that it is more honourable to be a converter of the soul, than a supporter of the body." This is a truth which I believe my good friend acquiesces in, and though not a public speaker, yet I believe he is a private minister of the gospel, and if compliments were not fulsome I would say that he could point to many, who, having been under his care, have profited much by the efforts he hath made for their good. But I will dismiss this, to ask my friend how it is with himself and the work of grace in his own soul? I will, in imagination, place myself at his elbow to hear his answer, and methinks it is this: That notwithstanding all the difficulties in the way, all the changes he has felt, and all the chastisements of his Father's hand, yet he can say, " Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Happy the man who can thus make his appeal to the Searcher of Hearts, who can with a holy confidence say, that of all objects, none are so delightful to him as Jesus; of all subjects, none so profitable to him as his grace; of all people, none so near to him as his

children, and of all privileges, none so great to him as to be permitted to come into his presence. This is a proof indeed, that such have their conversation in heaven, and their affections fixed upon the best things. If this be our case, what reason have we to be thankful, that while so many thousands are left to go on in the dangerous road of error and vanity, that we should have a disposition for better things, that our feet should be directed into the way of peace. Surely we may abundantly utter the memory of his great goodness, and sing of his righteousness. Let us then celebrate his marvellous kindness, with hearts of gladness, lips of praise, and lives of holiness, until we come to the full enjoyment of it in glory. There we shall take up the same subject, pursue it with renewed vigour, and never be wearied in repeating the praises and admiring the glories of Him who is the first and the last, the fountain of all happiness, the author of all grace, and the object of everlasting adoration. O may we be there, is my earnest prayer. But I must now conclude, wishing you the very best of blessings for ever; I remain

"Your very sincere and willing servant,

"C. B."

No. LI.

"Sheerness, March 19, 1796.

"My dear Friend—Your sister's letter in answer to my last I received, and thank her for the

relation of Christian experience therein given. Surely it is an unspeakable mercy when we have any reason whatever to conclude that the Lord hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Whatever blessings and favours we are made the participants of, to support us in time; this is one which will extend throughout the countless ages of eternity. It is therefore the mercy of mercies, under the sense of which we ought always to live, and for which we should be eternally grateful. But, alas! how often do we lose sight of it, and how much do the little insignificant things of time occupy our attention, and rest upon our minds as if of vast importance, while the more solemn and weighty concerns of our immortal souls are too much neglected. However, while we deplore our little spiritual minddedness, and indisposition to attend constantly to the things of God, yet, let us be thankful that 'the desire of our soul is to Him, and to the remembrance of his name.' Even this is an evidence of life, and where this once exists, not all the opposition of men, or the corruption congenial to our own nature, shall extinguish it. It is true we cannot expect absolute holiness while in such an unholy world; but we may expect divine grace to conquer our corruptions and make our path shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Let us then, my friend, be sincere in our dependance on, and earnest in our supplication to that God who will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. Whatever we neglect, let us not neglect to look to Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. Let us cry to

him, that our hopes may be brightened, our love inflamed, our hearts enlarged, and our souls all on fire to go forward in the divine life.

"I have lately been called aside from my public work, by sickness of body, so that I have not preached for near three weeks, but I have found it good to be afflicted. Even in my pain God supported me and let a drop of heaven into my soul. The 54th hymn in the 2d book of Dr. Watts was much blessed to me, particularly this verse:

"In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul, sweet morning star,
And he my rising sun."

"How kind is our indulgent God to be with his people, while passing through the fire. O, this makes afflictions sweet and profitable. Indeed, his presence makes us happy in any situation, and in any circumstances however outwardly distressing. To have one smile from him, is of more value and produces greater felicity than the approbation of all the monarchs and emperors of the earth. O may we always enjoy it.

"I promised to let you know when our chapel at Queenborough would be opened. It is fixed for Good Friday next. Mr. Shrubsole will preach in the morning, and I shall preach in the evening, God willing. There is a stir among them. Have every reason to believe the Lord is at work. May he speed the gospel plough.

"You no doubt heard some time ago, that the

Lord has given, or rather lent me a son. Pray for me that I may be enabled (should he live) to make a good use of him; I mean to devote him to the Lord. Mrs. Buck and he are both well, through mercy. Mrs. B. desires to be kindly remembered to you, and your sister. I must now conclude, wishing you, my dear friend, the enjoyment of his blessing, whose presence is life, and whose favour is as the cloud of the latter rain;

"And remain your's very sincerely,

"C. B."

No. LII.

"Sheerness, June 14, 1796.

"Was happy to hear that you were received into Mr. Wall's church, and *very* happy on this consideration, that one, however, of our family beside myself, was joined to the people of the Lord, and as it were publicly devoted to him; the consideration so affected me, that I could scarce forbear weeping. O that it were so with all the rest, for whom I cannot, do not, cease to pray. However, may you always be sensible of the honor and privilege you are now admitted to, and the obligation you are under, to live to the glory of God, by adorning his doctrine in all things. O, love and adore Him, who hath done such great things for you! To have a portion with God's people, to have a place in his church, is far greater dignity and felicity, than if you were advanced to the highest pitch of worldly glory. Let me then exhort you, to live mindful of

your privilege, constantly attending to his ordinances, meditating on his sacred word with a firm dependance upon Him for *all*, and you will find indeed those words to be true, that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. May you find them so, is the earnest prayer of,

"Your affectionate brother,

"C. B."

The steps which led to his removal, Mr. Buck describes in the following extracts from his narrative.

"Notwithstanding the kindness of many of the people at Sheerness, yet, being a time of war, many of the hearers belonging to the dock-yard, were employed of a Sabbath-day for months together. This so thinned the congregation, morning and afternoon, that I could not help bearing my testimony against what I thought to be the violation of the Sabbath-day. I found, however, there was no remedy. I therefore made up my mind to quit, and gave notice that I should leave at the end of six months. I had many intreaties to stay, but I could not be satisfied, as it regarded the constant working on the Sabbath-day.

"Mr. Shrubsole was taken suddenly ill and died. Of his character I have spoken before. The people made great lamentations over him, considering him as the father of the cause in that place, and had resided among them highly respected for so many

years. The streets were lined with people to see his funeral; it seemed as if all had left their habitations to behold a father carried to the grave, who had been so useful among them. The Rev. Rowland Hill preached his funeral sermon, to a very large auditory at the chapel, from Heb. iv. 6. I was now requested to take the whole charge, but I felt the same reason for declining it as before.

"Determining to leave Sheerness, my intention was made known to the Rev. John Eyre, of Hackney, who was about to retire from his school, and wished to find some suitable person to succeed him, and likewise to assist him occasionally at his chapel. We had a meeting, and the business was soon settled; and when my time was up at Sheerness, we finally removed from thence, to Well Street, Hackney, the present residence of the Rev. George Collison.

"Before I quite left Kent, I preached at the Association of Ministers at Tunbridge, on the subject of repentance; at the ordination of Mr. Gooding, at Lenham, I preached to the people, from 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; and, finally, at Sheerness, took my leave, from Heb. xiii. 22. The people seemed much affected. As many important considerations enter the mind in first undertaking a particular charge, so there ought to arise some reflections on leaving it. What is the motive that induces me to change? Is it from a restless disposition; a desire to get rid of difficulties;* a wandering spirit; a love of change;

* I was once accosted by a minister whom I did not know.

or, from a real desire to do more good, and to glorify God more? How have I preached during my stay? Have I been faithful, keeping nothing back, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, or have I given dissatisfaction, by trimming and endeavouring to please men, aiming to exhibit myself rather than the cross of Christ? Have I paid attention to my studies, improved time, cultivated my talent, and made any advances in spiritual knowledge; or have I been chargeable with negligence and slothfulness, spending the time in useless visits, when I should have been in the study? Have I been willing to listen to the tales of woe, to visit the sick, to sympathise with the wretched, and to do good to all; or have I been seeking my own gratification, studying my own ease, neglecting opportunities of usefulness, and living only for myself?

"Sir," said he, "I shall never forget hearing you once in London; I lived in the north of England, and in a situation where I met with a good many trials; I thought London a fine place, and that if I could settle there I should be more happy: I accordingly went, and thought first of all I would go and hear different ministers with which the metropolis abounded. Among the rest I found my way to Wilson Street Chapel, when you were preaching; during your sermon you made an observation something like this: 'That we often imagine by changing our situation we get rid of our trials; but we forget that God has a furnace for his people in every place, let them go where they will; and that, if we get out of one we shall soon get into another.' Is this true, thought I to myself; then there must be a furnace in London as well as elsewhere. I will immediately go back again and endeavour to be satisfied." He accordingly went back to his former situation. A word spoken in due season, how good it is.

How have I acted in private company? Have I sought their spiritual welfare, dropped useful hints, shown attention to children, and left a sweet savour of seriousness behind; or have I manifested a levity of spirit, and henceforth to be remembered as an excellent man in the pulpit, but a buffoon in company? In a word, has my conduct been such, that the cause has not been injured by it, have I left no stigma, brought no reproach, entered into no quarrels, but been of a meek and lowly spirit? Can it be said on parting, that the friends surround me with affection, and say, Well, though we cannot have your ministry, we hope to have your prayers, and in return you shall ever have ours; or, on the contrary, is it said by the people, We rejoice that he is gone; his temper was so indifferent, his conversation so uninteresting, his preaching so superficial, that no one will lament his departure? Such ought to be our reflections, and happy are those ministers whose consciences have been kept void of offence, and through grace, have been so enabled to act as to leave a good name behind them.

CHAP. IV.

The Settlement of Mr. Buck at Hackney.—His Removal to London.—His various Labours, Publications, and Death.

Of Mr. Buck it may be truly said, that "he worked while it was day." He merely exchanged one scene of labour for another. To be useful, and to the full extent of the talents committed to his trust, was his invariable endeavour. His friends, however, cannot but regret the necessity which compelled him to exhaust his strength and spirits in the care of a school, while he was engaged in the ministry of the gospel. Until a more liberal provision is made for dissenting ministers, many must be thus sacrificed, or tempted to form unsuitable connexions in life for the sake of independence, which are most injurious to their characters and usefulness. On this subject I could various tales unfold, that would chill the ardour of many a youthful candidate for the sacred office; when a man is absolutely in the power of a congregation, a thousand circumstances of daily occurrence will force upon him a painful sense of his dependance, and if to avoid this he undertakes a seminary, he virtually relinquishes the ministry: and if he can so far degrade himself as to turn "fortune-hunter," and

marry a wife for her money, he may thus purchase the smiles and congratulations of the worldly part of his flock, who feel a double satisfaction,—first, that they need not subscribe so much, that an increase of family will not lay them under an obligation to increase the means of his support; and, secondly, that their pastor is a man of property.—A mighty and most imposing consideration!—while he, poor man, has linked his destiny with an ideot, or some awkward piece of deformity, or a shrew who every moment reminds him, that to obtain "filthy lucre," he has planted "a thorn in his flesh," which must rankle there as long as "they both shall live."

Without further remark I shall now introduce Mr. Buck as his own biographer, to the close of his narrative; the last pages of which are evidently written with a weak and trembling hand. It appears to have been the last effort of his mind, and displays the energy of his principles, and the unabated ardor of his zeal.

"1797.—I now succeeded Mr. Eyre in taking the charge of a large boarding school at Hackney. This I found to be a very important undertaking, as all will find who engage in it; requiring great attention, much labour, good health and spirits, invincible patience, a knowledge of the diversified powers and capacities of youth, a happy art of adapting ideas to the juvenile mind, a fixed plan of government and discipline, a determination never to be hurt by the little tales sometimes carried home to the parents, a real love for children, as also a plea-

sure in the communication of knowledge to them. These and many other qualifications are necessary if we wish to succeed, indeed we should hardly have any thing else to do.

"I began to think, however, that though I had now no settled charge as a pastor, it would be wrong for me not to exercise my talents on a Sabbath-day, where I might be called. Besides helping Mr. Eyre occasionally, I soon had numerous applications from various places in and about the metropolis. In going to preach at one of these, I met with some degree of encouragement from a circumstance related to me by the gentlemen, managers of the place. They had been to visit a man in the neighbourhood who was dangerously ill, the account he gave of himself was, I believe, nearly as follows:—He had been a seafaring man, but being in London, he was one day passing through Silver Street, and seeing a gateway that seemed to lead to something like a place of worship, he thought within himself, 'I am shortly going to sea, I shall perhaps never have another opportunity, I'll go in.' I happened at that time to be the preacher. During the course of the sermon something that was said struck him so very much, that he was determined to enquire the name of the preacher, which he obtained, and which it seems he never entirely forgot. He went soon, however, to sea, not thinking much about the word preached. He made his voyage and returned. Soon after he was was laid upon the bed of sickness. Now he began to recollect and seriously to consider, but still he was very ignorant. In this

situation the gentlemen above referred to saw him: they had much conversation and prayer with him; he confessed how ignorant he was, and how negligent he had been, but there was a religion that he liked, and that was what he once heard a Mr. Buck preach at Silver Street Chapel. The gentlemen were glad to hear this, they had now something to work upon, they followed up their visits, convictions were deepened, knowledge increased, and at last before he died he gave evident testimony that God was with him. He died very happy, and one of his last expressions was this, 'I now take my cable and fix it on my anchor, Jesus, and go through the storm,' or words nearly to that effect. But what makes this circumstance more interesting is, that the landlord of the house was himself brought under serious impressions, by listening at the door to hear what was going on between this man and the visitors.

"Notwithstanding my school, it was thought desirable by some of my friends to obtain a place, if possible, where I should more constantly preach. The chapel in Princes Street, Moorfields, was to be disposed of. It was obtained, and opened December 3, 1797. The Rev. Thomas Bryson preached in the morning, and I addressed the congregation afternoon and evening. The place on the whole was well attended, and future events have proved that I was not directed there in vain.

"I opened also a Week-day Lecture in the large hall at my own house at Hackney. This was exceedingly well attended, and I have reason to believe the divine blessing attended the word.

"In former days Surry Chapel often used to be the place of my resort, and I may truly say, if ever I enjoyed any thing of the presence of God, it has been at this place, under the ministry of our truly respected and venerable friend, Mr. Hill. I was now called to preach there on a Sabbath evening, to an immensely large congregation. This was affecting to me, as it reminded me of former times, and I was happy to bear my public testimony in a place where I had formerly enjoyed so much.

"The congregation increasing much at Princes Street, many were anxious to have the ordinances administered. They wished that some kind of society or church should be formed. Accordingly several persons came forward who were thought to be suitable characters, and the Rev. Joseph Brooksbank with myself attended the meeting, a plan of church government was read, a solemn address given, and the whole committed by earnest prayer and supplication to the blessing of God.

"During the vacation I made a little excursion for the benefit of my health. I first went to Farnham, where I had the pleasure of seeing some of my old friends; from thence to Southampton, where I was kindly received by that respectable and worthy minister, Mr. Kingsbury; from thence to Portsmouth, and Brighton, where I had an opportunity of hearing rather a quaint, but still excellent sermon by Mr. Caldwell, from Psalm cxxx. 6, a sermon I think I shall never forget. At Lewes I went to hear the curious Huntingdon Jenkins, I think as much like Mr. Huntingdon in manner and

mode of preaching as any man I ever heard, except that he has not Huntingdon's memory; but he soon discovered the same spirit as the man whom he so much resembled. His prayer, if it might be so called, had no petition in it, but consisted in making declarations, and telling God Almighty something he had not known before. I sat just before him, and whether he thought I was a clergyman or not, I cannot tell, but he fulminated most vehemently against carnal ministers, with a spirit rather of triumph than with an air of pity. From thence I proceeded to Croydon and London, and resting a day or two, set off for Cambridge and Newmarket. Here I did not stay long; for expecting an event at home, I returned, and in a day or two had an accession to my family of a third child; this, however, did not survive but a fortnight. This was a trial I never felt before. Perhaps no one knows what it is to lose a child, but those who have experienced it; when taken thus so young from a world of sin and trouble, perhaps it is wrong to grieve as some do; herein should be the language of submission. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"But death comes to all ages; shortly after I committed to the grave one more advanced, the daughter of Joseph Reyner, Esq.* and preached her fu-

* I cannot pass here, without paying respect to a name worthy to be recorded. He wants it not; but if he who makes even a blade of grass to grow where it did not before benefit society, what shall we say of him, who for years has employed himself in visiting the abodes of the wretched, distributing an immense

neral sermon at Kingsland Chapel, from 2 Kings, iv. 26. 'It is well.'

"But death comes to all classes. The Rev. Thomas Bryson, who lodged in my house at Hackney, and boarded with us, was taken ill. He was desirous of trying a friend's house near his meeting, where he languished till the 24th of April, 1799, leaving all his household furniture in my possession. His funeral was respectably attended. His funeral sermon was preached at the New Road meeting, by the Rev. John Townsend, and I endeavoured also to improve it at Princes Street Chapel. I was requested to draw up his epitaph, which may be seen on his tomb, as likewise a sketch of his character, which was published in the Evangelical Magazine. I felt great affection for him, and living with me for a time, we spent many happy moments together. Though rather irritable in his temper, yet there was a conscientiousness about him that was well worthy to be imitated. He was very faithful in the pulpit and out of it. I never knew a man so little afraid of giving reproof when he thought it necessary.

"Having, as before stated, been always fond of the pen from a child, so I never lost the delight which I first experienced. After I came to the knowledge of the truth, I began immediately selecting and transcribing from various authors in divinity. This I carried on also while a student, and long af-

number of tracts, projecting useful plans, countenancing useful societies, and always stretching out his hand to relieve the sufferings of humanity, or contributing to the propagation of the everlasting gospel.

terwards; so that I have filled a number of common place books of various sizes. Among the rest, I had collected a number of anecdotes, merely for my own profit and entertainment. This volume I happened to show to Mr. Bryson, who thought it very desirable to publish it, if the anecdotes were but properly arranged, and some improvement made to each. Here then I began my authorship. I set to work, and this summer published the first volume of my anecdotes; the first copy of which that came from the press I presented to my mother, as a token of filial affection and regard. This work, in an improved state, with an additional volume,* I have great reason to be thankful, has met with a pretty general circulation; and from the effects produced, I have never had any reason to lament taking the advice of my above-mentioned friend. My design was to blend cheerfulness with piety; to show in some characters the deformity of vice, that the reader might be deterred from it, and in general, that industry, learning, morals, and religion, place men in a higher situation, and secure more happiness, than can possibly be found in any other state, where ignorance reigns, where sloth is indulged, morality neglected, and religion despised. Some they have caused to weep, others they have made smile; but if by this publication I have contributed in any degree to enliven the family circle, to add a little to that repository of this nature which ministers and others delight to carry

* A third volume has been published since his death by Gale and Fenner.

about with them; if the relations therein contained have strengthened the faith of any in Divine Providence; if any young persons have received any impression, or gathered any thing from it to stimulate to honesty, virtue, and religion; then will I rejoice, and to God I desire to give all the glory.

"This was my first child in my literary family; though I have now to record the introduction of another of a different kind.

"Samuel, my fourth child, was born September 21, 1799, and baptized at Princes Street Chapel, by the Rev. Dr. Simpson, October 27, following, and we had great reason for gratitude, as it was a time very severe and distressing; but divine goodness interposed, and prayer was answered.

"But how great and sudden oftentimes are the changes in a family. One is born, another dies. What is this but a striking picture of the world at large. Every hour multitudes entering, every hour multitudes departing. My mother who resided with me at this time, was taken ill, and died. Besides me, she had two sons, who unhappily both of them turned out wild. It was a consolation to her, that I had been preserved, and that she had to spend her last days in peace, and with a child of whom she once said in her letters, "that she was happy in having one boy for the Lord." It afforded me also as much happiness in the recollection that my letters to her in past time, when she lived at a distance, had been the means of impressing her own mind with a deeper concern about divine things. Her death was improved, according to her desire, from Psalm

cxxvi. 6. At the time of her death, I was preparing my Theological Dictionary. It was not a little singular, that I had just finished the article funeral rites, and the next I had to begin after her interment, was future state.

"But what a world of deaths, of sorrows, and of accidents in this. A member of my church, a Mr. Alexander, in attempting to go from one ship to another in the River Thames, the rope by which he held, suddenly giving way, he immediately fell into the river, and was not seen to rise again. The tide running strong every effort to save him was unsuccessful. His body lay in the water upwards of six days, when he was at last found by a waterman. Here then was a sudden transition from earth to heaven! The night before his death he was heard in prayer to utter these words,

"Why should we start and fear to die,
What timorous worms we mortals are;
Death is the gate of endless joy,
And yet we dread to enter there."

"In the morning the family met as usual for worship. The hymn that was sung was the 42d of 1st Book of Dr. Watts, 'Adore and tremble for our God,' &c. which being of a very awful nature, he mentioned to one near him, that his mind was very solemnly affected with it. It was not less remarkable also that while he sat at breakfast that last morning, he said, 'that he longed to be in heaven.' His wishes were realized before night, as there was rea-

son to believe he was truly a good man. I improved his death to a large congregation at Princes Street Chapel, from Job. xxiv. 22. 'No man is sure of life.'

"At the close of this year, being the close of the century; I thought it, as many others did, a subject worthy of improvement. On the last sabbath evening, therefore, I preached a sermon at Princes Street Chapel, entitled, 'The Close of Eighteenth Century improved, in which the most remarkable religious events of the last hundred years are considered.' It was afterwards published, and was my second appearance in a public dress. Having spoken highly of the Humane Society, they kindly gave me an invitation to attend their public anniversary. On every gentleman's plate was a paper, in which I found among the rest, an extract from my sermon. After dinner many of the persons who had been restored during the year were introduced, they walked round the room with a bible under their arms, while the music played in the most gentle, soft, and pleasing manner. I scarcely ever beheld a sight more interesting and affecting. It drew tears from my eyes, to see greyheaded old men, aged women, young persons, women with infants in their arms, all of whom were happily rescued from a watery grave, by means of this institution. I could not help retiring and saying within myself; if that be an invaluable institution, which saves the bodies of so many from destruction, what must that noble plan be which has for its object the salvation of immortal souls. And if those who are actively employed in using every exertion for the safety of the human bo-

dy, are to be considered as characters highly worthy of honour and respect; how then are they to be esteemed, who spend their whole lives, and use their utmost efforts to save souls. He then who saves the body is humane, but he, saith Solomon, who winneth souls is wise.

"February 16, 1801.—An addition was made to my family by a fifth child; a daughter, whom I dedicated to God in baptism at Princes Street Chapel. An account of this amiable and happy child will be found in its place, as she was not spared to dwell in this vale of tears more than eight years and six months.

"This year, unknown to me, I was chosen one of the directors of the Missionary Society. A society always dear to me, from the first of its commencement. Its object so grand, its plan so uncontrolled and liberal. Its constituents men, almost of all parties or denominations. Its directors so active and disinterested, that I truly thought it an honour to be enrolled among them. For the first eight or ten years I was enabled to attend the different meetings for business, and which I did with great pleasure. But I regret that through repeated indisposition, I have been prevented from filling up my place as formerly.

"It must afford pleasure to every one who loves the cause to find, that notwithstanding all the opposition the society has met with, and the difficulties with which it has had to encounter, that it is in a state of the greatest prosperity. I cannot help observing here, that I look upon this institution as one

of the most valuable ever formed in Great Britain. I say nothing to the disparagement of other societies engaged before or since in the same work; God be praised for them. But this society is founded on so noble and broad a basis, that it looks with an auspicious eye on all mankind, without any design whatever to form a sect, or to enlist under a party. A society that has warmed the hearts of thousands upon thousands at home. A society whose delightful influence, under God, has been extensively felt abroad. A society that has promoted Christian unity among ministers and others in a manner perhaps not to be paralleled. A society I rejoice to say, that has been the fruitful mother of a numerous offspring, now rising up not only to be a blessing to Great Britain, but shedding their happy influences in many a wilderness and solitary place. A society that has called forth into action, the energies, services, zeal, and talents of numbers who were before in comparative obscurity; and that not to act on a contracted but grand scale. A society that has excited a spirit of prayer and reverberated in the sound of praise throughout the nation in a most pleasing degree. A society which I pray may still exist and prosper in union with all other institutions of the same kind, until the great work be accomplished and all the ends of the earth see the salvation of God. And when this hand of mine that now writes these lines shall lie mouldering in the dust, if any one should ask who Charles Buck was, let it be answered that he was one who was a decided friend, and most warmly attached to the Missionary Society.

"This year I visited Bristol a fourth time. The congregations both here and at Kingswood, are as large, if not larger than when I was here before. Though the harmonious voice and the amazing powers of the great founder of these places can no more be witnessed within these walls, yet the glory is not departed. The good done, the various societies formed, and the hundreds of children now under instruction, would have rejoiced his heart could he have foreseen it. Bristol, like London, is a highly favoured place, where there are valuable ministers to preach, and multitudes pressing to hear the glorious gospel.

"This year I was chosen one of the committee and contributors of the Evangelical Magazine. A publication well known, and however discarded by some, has been one grand instrument of carrying on the work of God in this country. If it be not a repository for critical and literary researches, for which indeed it never was designed, yet it must be acknowledged that the useful matter it contains, its peculiar cheapness, the intelligence it communicates, the noble end to which the profits are appropriated, and the good it is productive of, render it a work worthy of countenance. Multitudes living in insular situations who have no opportunities of mixing much with society; many confined in chambers of pain and sickness, and even some on a dying bed, are telling the moments when the messenger shall arrive to convey to them a work which presents to them information, not only as to what is going on at home, but in all the various parts of the world; and

such has been the rapid march of truth since the time of its commencement, that it becomes a hundred times more interesting than it was at its beginning. We have a vast variety of periodical publications in the present day, and the more the better, if they tend to check vice, counteract infidel productions and do good. Some may excel in critical learning, others in metaphysical reasoning, some in able reviews, and others in beautiful language and elegant diction; yet however excellent their claims, it is certain the Evangelical may at least mingle in the happy circle, and in her turn be heard. And if she cannot say what some can, this I think she may be allowed to declare, 'I have been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I have been a father to the poor, and have *caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*'

"I should have mentioned before that my preaching concerns are increasing; I found that my school and so much preaching became too laborious, and that I must either abridge the one or the other. I resolved to remove nearer town and take only a few, which I accordingly did, but finding the church to increase, and many avocations beside, with a very ill state of health, I renounced my seminary altogether with the exception of one whom I retained with me for a time.

"January 8, 1802.—The various societies in London at this period began wonderfully to revive. From the time that the Missionary Society was established it seems as if a new impulse had been given to the religious world. Improvements,

enlargements in old institutions, many new ones daily forming, solicitations were made for sermons for one, countenance for another, committees for another. Those ministers and gentlemen of an active turn who reside in London and its vicinity, know pretty well from experience, what incessant calls there have been, and still are, to attend the different but admirable institutions in the metropolis. Some men are fitted for the study, others for public services. I thought a little of both was best, and that one was delightfully prepared for the other. Too much I found would not do for my weak constitution, I was therefore obliged to keep back from several important things in which I was requested to engage. The committee at Hoxton College wished to put me on their list. I knew not how to refuse the claims of my Alma Mater, and therefore became one of the number. It is a fault in us perhaps to engage in more than we can actually perform. A few men may be found of such strength of constitution, such diversified talents, such promptness of thought, such capability of adapting themselves to almost every useful object, that nothing comes amiss to them; they are a kind of *universalists* in active exertions for the good of mankind. But these are but few, and those of a liberal spirit, who cannot do what they would, must be satisfied to do what they can. I have always thought it, and O that the rising ministry may always think it an honour to be employed for God, whether it be with one, or whether it be with ten talents. Standing in the midst of a delightful and charming circle of re-

ligious and benevolent institutions in this great city, my soul has burnt to grasp them all. But this can only be done by desire and prayer for their welfare. The field is so wide, the objects so numerous, and the time required so much, that some prudence is required even here, lest in a benevolent career we run so fast, as to kick our feet against a stone, and thus impede our future exertions. I cannot but remark, however, here, that with all due deference to the ministers of God in the past age for their learning, solidity, talents, judgment, and usefulness, it is for this age that the Almighty seems to have reserved the honour of more extensive exertions. Many of our forefathers had hardly any thing of a public nature to call them out of their studies; but now a zealous minister can hardly sit in his study, at all, for the imperious calls of open and public benevolence, inviting him to active and repeated exertions in the sacred cause.

"But to return to the last Committee I have referred to, and which I have attended generally ever since, I have found to be a very important and responsible one. The examination of candidates, the discrimination to be made, the fidelity demanded, and yet the tenderness to be exercised, require no small attention. But nothing has been more gratifying, than to consider the number of applications for admission. It is truly pleasing, not only as it regards this, but many other institutions of the same kind, to observe how God is raising up and sending forth labourers into his vineyard. The number of young men, who have been introduced into the

ministry of late years, is a delightful consideration. New chapels are erected; old ones are repaired; small ones are enlarged; the gospel introduced into many places where it was not before; so that we may rejoice in the prospect of increasing good being done in every direction.

"But to proceed: the cause went on very prosperously at Princes Street Chapel; the church increased; many pleasing instances appeared of converting grace. A servant who lived with us at this time, was greatly affected under the word, became truly serious, joined the church, and is, I trust, walking consistently to this day. It must be no small joy to Christian masters, when instances of this kind occur. How many servants will have reason for ever to be thankful that they were introduced into Christian families, where an altar for God was found, and opportunities given to hear the gospel, by which means they have been brought to a saving knowledge of the truth.

"This year death again appeared in our family. My eldest sister, at the age of forty-eight, was called to the grave. I stop here to pay a tribute of respect to her memory. She had been in London for some years; was a woman of agreeable manners, and much respected by those who knew her, but an entire stranger to the truth. To me she was a great friend on my first coming to town; but when I became serious, I was the object of persecution as to my religious sentiments, though she did not withdraw her kindness in other respects from me. Her prejudices ran very high against religion, and her

language sometimes very severe and bitter against all who made any profession: but the hearts of all are in the hands of the Most High. These prejudices began at last a little to subside; and after all the contests we had had about religion, to my astonishment, she married a gentleman who was a religious man. Her Sabbaths were therefore now differently employed to what they had been, and very different from any thing I ever expected. Both she and her husband came and sat under my ministry at Princes Street, and when the time of her last sickness arrived, I was sent for to pray by her, which, considering former circumstances of opposition and enmity to the truth, I was scarcely able to do, being overpowered by my feelings. Let those who have persecuting relations not despair. Here is an instance of the strongest prejudice removed, and that after its indulgence for a great number of years. Let us not then, at any time, render railing for railing, but pray earnestly for our enemies and those who are out of the way; and who can tell but our prayers may be answered, to our infinite satisfaction and happiness.

"It will appear from this narrative, that while many other ministers suffer little or nothing in a long course of years, from either inconvenience or dilapidated state of their places, or other local circumstances; on the contrary, I have been much tried in this respect, as will be seen hereafter. Just as we were rising into great prosperity at Princes Street Chapel, the place well attended, the church increasing, and many constantly coming forward to testify

the power of the word, we received notice from the Steward of Lord Darnley, whose property it was, to quit in a short time. We could not help ourselves, as we had no legal claim. The reason of the notice was, that a plan had been laid for the building of a new market, and that it was necessary the chapel should be pulled down. This was a great trial to me, considering the very pleasing prospect we had before us, and the good that had been done. The church was formed 2d May, 1798, with but a few members, and now at our leaving, Sept. 7, 1802, being about four years and four months, the number of names of members enrolled in the church book amounted to one hundred and forty, many of whom had been impressed under my ministry there. I preached my last sermon there from 2 Cor. ii. 14, 'Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.' It was truly an affecting and solemn time.

"The place was soon pulled down. I went and stood on its ruins, and felt within myself emotions of a mixed nature; a kind of melancholy, in beholding our sanctuary laid in the dust; and yet a pleasure in the recollection of its being the happy spot where many first began to draw their spiritual breath. And as the place of our nativity is generally remembered with a peculiar fondness, so many could not pass the ruins, without being deeply affected on the remembrance that there it was they received their new-birth, and became new creatures in Christ Jesus.

"It was with some difficulty our friends obtained a place to which we could remove. At last, Camomile Street Meeting was granted us for afternoon and evening only, the Rev. Mr. Reynolds preaching in the mornings. I opened my commission there from Matt. xxviii. 20. The place was so crowded, and such a contest was there about the seats, that many thought they would not come again. This however subsided, as no doubt curiosity had excited many to come who did not belong to us, merely to hear the first sermon. Here then again we fixed our tabernacle for a time, except that we found it rather a disadvantage not having the place in the morning, although it gave me an opportunity of preaching elsewhere at different places on that part of the day.

"I had been for some time employed in preparing for the press my Theological Dictionary, a work which cost me much labour day and night, and no one to assist me, except now and then the bare copying of an article. The vast variety of books to be consulted, the discriminations to be made, the difficulty of seizing those accurate definitions I wanted, the various opinions of authors on the same subject, the including every article in Ecclesiastical History, Theology, and Morals, rendered it rather a formidable work for one man, and that a weak one. The fact was, I began it for my own use, without ever thinking of making it public to the world: but as I advanced, it still grew of more importance. On showing it to some friends, they were of opinion that such a manuscript should not be locked up in obscurity, and that the sooner it was

given to the public the better, being a distinct thing from all other dictionaries which had been published. I have said it was a work of labour, but I must add also that it was a work of pleasure. Here indeed I realized the motto *Labor ipse voluntas.* It seems as if it were to be done; for though often interrupted by indisposition, I shall never forget the ardour, the eagerness I felt in passing from one article to another, until the whole was done. On looking back to some of my papers, I found this memorandum, which the reader, perhaps, will not think it superfluous for me to record.

"Dec. 11, 1802.—This evening, after near four years, I finished the last article in my Theological Dictionary. I desire to be thankful for health and strength given me to finish it. O! Father of mercies! let it be a lasting blessing to thy church, and to all who shall peruse it! During the time I have been employed in it, I have met with some of the greatest trials both in body, mind, and circumstances I ever experienced, yet hitherto the Lord hath helped me. Bless the Lord, O my soul! Should my life be spared, may it be still employed in some useful service; that while I live, I may live *for* God, as well as *to* him. Amen."

"The work was published. It met with the approbation of the public, far beyond any hopes I could indulge; and I here desire to offer my most unfeigned thanks to Almighty God, for the usefulness with which it has been attended, and that my life has been spared to correct and enlarge, and greatly to improve it in succeeding editions.

" January 25, 1803.—I have now to record another family mercy, in the safe delivery of Mrs. B. of a daughter, being the sixth child. Repeated support demands repeated acknowledgments of the divine goodness. While some sink under the trying hour, peculiar support was here given, so that we have reason to say, 'What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits?' I dedicated this child to God in baptism, the 20th day of March, 1803, publicly at Camomile Street Meeting.

" The practice of vaccination having greatly succeeded, a meeting was called for the purpose of taking it more extensively into consideration. With great pleasure I attended this meeting; the Vaccine Institution was then formed, and the name of Dr. Jenner celebrated in high and strong encomiums. And surely whoever has any pity upon mankind; whoever rejoices in the thought of preventing contagion; whoever is desirous that their children should be kept from pain and disfiguration; whoever wishes to alleviate human misery; whoever wishes to rescue a human being from the danger of losing his life, must rejoice in the discovery and establishment of such a system as this. Did I not know something of the nature of the human mind, I should marvel at the prejudice that yet remains against a system, which, if properly followed up, would banish the horrid disease of the smallpox out of the world. The multitude of lives saved by vaccine inoculation already is astonishing. What then has saved one, shall I withhold from another?

There is hardly any thing of a human kind, however excellent, but may have failed, or had its exceptions in some few instances, and that often from circumstances which may be accounted for. This, therefore, is no argument, and I do most sincerely hope the time will come when all prejudice shall entirely die away.

"To proceed to another subject; I hope I am no enthusiast, nor too minute in the detail of any circumstances which relate to the welfare of any of my fellow-creatures, either of body or of mind. The operations of Divine Providence ought to be carefully marked in the various events of human life, and he loses a most delicious treat indeed, who passes through his appointed career without ever recognizing a divine hand, or observing the wisdom and goodness of God in his various dispensations. It so happened, that a certain very popular and large lectureship in the city was one evening disappointed of the preacher. The managers, in great consternation, applied to me; and though it was very inconvenient, I obtained a supply for my own place, and addressed the congregation from a passage connected with the parable of the tares. Some time after, the managers received the following letter from a young man:

"*A Letter from a young man to the Managers of Broad Street Sabbath Evening Lecture.*

"A young man requests you to join him in praises to Almighty God for a blessing received under the word delivered in this house.

"The sermon to which the writer alludes, was preached on a Sabbath evening so long since as March or April last, from the parable of the tares. Convictions of sin and the fear of death followed, which brought on such an unhappy frame of mind, and such weakness of body, as nearly to realize his fears, and he was obliged to go to the country, where God was pleased to direct him to that great Physician whose blood alone proved an antidote to his afflictions.

"Independent of the blessing resulting to him as an individual, from being, he would humbly presume, a subject of mercy, he is happy to join his mite with the thousands who bear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. Previous to this he attended the moral ministry of Dr. R. and knew nothing of the necessity of an atoning sacrifice for sin, to enable a man, in his fallen state, ever to approach his Maker; but the Spirit of God, by this sermon, showed him he was a sinner, and that he could not appear before a just and perfect God without being condemned. Indeed, so strong were his convictions, and so sensible that his good works, on which he had placed his reliance, were all done from a wrong motive, that he recollects praying to God, in despair, to send him at once to hell, and not to bring him to judgment. This awful experience should influence every young person so to examine themselves, that they build not on this sandy foundation, which must inevitably give way.

"When under these distressing circumstances, it was impressed on his mind that religion was the

only thing that could alleviate his trouble; in consequence, he attended closely his stated place of worship; but alas! the preaching of morality only served to deprive him even of hope, for he found himself unable to keep the perfect law of God for an hour.

"Those blessed doctrines of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and complete pardon for those who are enabled, through mercy, to apply the blood of sprinkling to their conscience, he had before this been unhappily led to consider as enthusiasm and madness; which now being realized, made him one of the happiest of mortals; and now he lives to sing of mercy, and to declare, and hetr usts, through grace, it is his sole desire and ambition, to be an humble follower of the Lamb.—To him, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be praise and glory, now and evermore. Amen."

"Thus God acts as a sovereign, and works by whom he will. I never preached at this lecture before nor since. Let God have all the glory and all the praise.

"March 28, 1803.—This day a loss was sustained to the Church of Christ, in the death of the Rev. John Eyre, of Hackney. I was myself very unwell at the time, and being on a footing of intimacy with this worthy man, when the intelligence came, it affected me exceedingly. Though very weak, yet, as I was invited, I struggled hard to be at the funeral, which was very numerously attended, and very solemn. The Rev. Mr. Glascott read the burial ser-

vice, and the Rev. Rowland Hill delivered a funeral address from the pulpit, from Matt. xxv. 21.

"Mr. Eyre had not a strong constitution, and was often laid aside from his beloved work. His mind was ardently set on doing good. The Evangelical Magazine and the Missionary Society were, however, two of his favourite objects. For these he most cheerfully laboured, and for their success most fervently prayed. He lived to see some happy effects produced, at home and abroad, by these moral instruments; but had he lived till now, how would his heart have rejoiced in beholding the seed springing up in various directions, and promising a most delightful and abundant harvest. His portrait has been justly drawn, and truly it was said of him, that in every relation he was a burning and shining light, nor was the Christian less eminent than the minister; the best of husbands, the tenderest of fathers, the kindest of masters, and most faithful of friends.

"His eager activity to be useful often urged him beyond the powers of a body enfeebled by labour and disease. The sword was too sharp for the scabbard; his vivid feelings and exertions shook the tabernacle of clay, and his spirit plumed for flight to the eternal rest. He never looked on death with dismay, but as 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' His affections embraced all mankind. His increasing cares and pursuits, more abundantly to diffuse the gospel of the grace of God, overwhelmed a frame become broken, yet exulting in the pleasure and prospect of doing good; and he died just at the

moment when the great object of his heart appeared ready to be accomplished. His last hours displayed the triumph of faith, and, amidst every endeared attachment, and the love of all his brethren, his work being done upon earth, he meekly bowed his head in the bosom of his Lord, of whom he had often said, in the midst of Christian affection and earthly comfort, 'that to depart and be with Christ was far better.'*

"This year I was chosen one of the preachers at the early morning lecture now held at Camomile Street. This is well attended, and it is pleasing to find so many rising from their beds, and hastening to the house of God. This lecture is of ancient date; it was instituted in the year of the glorious revolution, 1688, and has been carried on ever since that memorable period. These services are very desirable to many, who are in situations where they have not the whole of the sabbath at their command, and there is great reason to believe much good is done.

"Those who have children, whatever pleasure they may derive from them, must also expect to have trials with them. We were now called to experience a different sensation to any thing we had known before. In coming home from a friend's house where we dined, we lost our youngest son Samuel. He was not then four years of age. From about seven o'clock till near midnight we were almost distracted. We sought in various places, en-

* Evangelical Magazine, July 1803, p 286.

quired of watchmen, and others, but all in vain. We had him cried, but to no purpose. We sat melancholy, sometimes imagining he might be shut up in Bunhill Fields, or that he might be decoyed by some vagrant for the sake of his clothes—a variety of painful suppositions rushed in upon the mind. After giving it all up for that night, in the possession of the most unpleasant feelings, a knock was heard at the door, which, on opening, to our great happiness, we found a gentleman of our own acquaintance with the lad in his hand. Losing his way he had straggled up as far as Islington, and finding he was wrong, soon brought by signs of his distress, people around him. A kind lady took him under her care, gave him some oysters and had him cried. The gentleman before mentioned happening to pass at the time, thinking it might be a son of ours, took charge of him, and kindly conducted him home. Thus our fears were removed, and we retired to rest, thankful indeed that he who seemed dead was alive again, that he that was lost was now found. I have not mentioned this as a novel circumstance, for it is a common thing for children to be lost in this great and populous city, but no one can tell but those who have experienced it, the painful sensation of a parent upon such an occasion.

"Mr. Kicherer, one of the Missionaries in Africa, visited this country, and brought with him, as a kind of specimen of the good doing in that part of the world, three converted hottentots. These were publicly examined at several places. Among the rest I catechised them at Camomile Street, and

it was truly pleasing to hear the answers they gave without knowing the question till it was proposed to them. A specimen of an examination of this kind I have given in my Practical Expositor, Nov. 7. How pleasing to reflect on the tendency and influence of the gospel of Christ. How admirably adapted is it to every nation under heaven; what wonderful effects are produced by it; and, as it was designed for all nations, and as the commission is given to preach it to every creature, and as the divine presence and support are promised to the end of time, so may we not expect that the exertions now making in different parts of the world, shall be crowned with success; and that in due time, all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

"This year was remarkable for mortality among the ministers of the gospel. Among others, we might mention, Messrs. Bradbury of Kennington, Caldwell of Silver Street Chapel, Newell of Great Missenden, Crole* of Pinner's Hall, Densham of itinerant memory, Jackson of Warminster, Parsons of Kineton, Warwickshire, De Courcy of Shrewsbury, Reynolds of Camomile Street, Cuthbert of

* Mr. Crole was a man of talent and application. I think I have heard him say, that he could not well go to rest of a Sabbath-evening until he had fixed his subjects for the Sabbath-day following, a week before hand; he thus gave himself time to think. This is somewhat different from those who tell us they hardly know what to preach from till they are in the pulpit. Mr. Crole's conduct, however, is not here quoted as an invariable rule for all.

Ely Chapel, Allison of Ponder's End, Brown of Harlow, besides Mr. Eyre, whom I have already referred to. But the work of the Lord has not staid. Others have been raised up to succeed them, and thus the cause lives, for though passing perpetually from one instrument to another, and committed to *earthen* vessels, which must be broken, yet the fountain is the same, and as long as ever this continues to flow, conduits shall not be wanting to convey the sacred streams of divine truth, to water, enrich, and fertilize a wilderness world.

" I have sometimes thought it would have been an honour to have lived in the days of the Reformers, and to have been a coadjutor with them in the great work of bursting asunder the shackles of superstition, and dispersing the awful shades of ignorance which covered the nations of Europe. It would have been an honour indeed. That glorious work may be considered the foundation and forerunner of all the happy events since. Yet I rejoice that I have been permitted to live in an age, which if these blessed Reformers could have fully realised as the effects of the seed which they had sown, it would have no doubt filled them with exultation and delight. They rejoiced in the emancipation of Europe from the iron bondage of spiritual tyranny; they took such courage, in beholding only a gleam of light hovering here and there on a benighted world, that many of them nobly sealed the truth with their blood. But what do we behold in the present day? Scenes more delightful than our fathers ever beheld. They laboured indeed honourably and

faithfully in the great cause: they were employed as the sacred pioneers to clear the way and break up the ground. We have entered into their labours. And now blessed are our eyes that see what we see, and our ears in hearing what we hear. Truly a most pleasing scene appears, a scene which God himself delights in, in which the Redeemer shall be exalted, which angels shall exult at, and which the Divine Spirit has promised to bless. Princes and people, nobles and dignitaries, statesmen and their constituents, merchants and mechanics, the opulent citizen and the rustic plebeian, the philosopher and the common labourer, the rich man and the poor, the advanced in age and the juvenile stripling, the master and the servant, parents and their children, all coming forward with their utmost energy, by their exertions, by their countenance, by their contributions, by their prayers, by their addresses and exhortations, to promote the great cause. Blessed God! what, under many years of weakness and languor, hast thou spared me to see! An immense group from almost all denominations, from the prince to the peasant, from all parts of this happy country, united into one vast assembly; not for the purpose of forming a council to keep the people in ignorance, not for the strengthening of a party, not to bind faster the chains of prejudice and ignorance, not even for the liberation of a single quarter or insulated part of the earth; but with a sincere, free, full, unwearied determination, by their united efforts, to hoist the standard of unadulterated truth, to such an elevation and on so many eminences,

that not only Europe, but all the four quarters of the globe, shall behold its glory. I am led to these remarks, from the consideration of the next circumstance I have to record in the course of my life.

" I attended at a meeting called for the purpose of forming that noble institution, The British and Foreign Bible Society. And here I cannot but congratulate my beloved country, that though for so many years engaged with other nations in desolating wars, yet some of her sons at least have not forgotten the blessings of peace, even of that peace which extends not only to the utmost stretch of the life of man here, but which shall be commensurate with eternity itself. A peace not to be restricted to the little narrow bounds of the island in which we live, but to extend its influence far and wide. O England, highly favoured of heaven, while many other nations are sunk in infidelity and superstition, thou art privileged in the possession of a vast, mighty, moral reservoir, from whence the sacred streams of divine revelation are flowing into all parts of the earth; so that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Die then when I may, let it be written on my coffin, " He lived in a happy day." This institution, notwithstanding its opposition, has abundantly succeeded, and the annual reports are fraught with the most interesting intelligence.

" Mr. Lacey, a member of our church, appearing to have gifts for the ministry, was called to settle

over the church at Winchmore-hill. His ordination was fixed, and it devolved upon me as his pastor to give the Charge. These services, if they were not quite so long and tedious, and that in general in the midst of a heated and crowded congregation, are of a most solemn and interesting nature. Leaving every thing comparatively beside, and taking upon ourselves the charge of souls, is of all the most important concern. An ordination therefore of a Christian minister, is no trifling circumstance, but connects with it ideas of the most serious and important nature. Considering the responsibility of the trust committed, the work a minister has to do, and the little time he has to do it in, makes him tremble who gives the charge, as well as the person who receives it, if they feel as they ought to feel. Upon this occasion, however, I engaged in this important part; the Rev. William Thorpe asked the questions, and addressed the people, and the Rev. Matthew Wilks prayed the ordination prayer."

"The Rev. T. Lewis was set apart to the work of the ministry, at Orange-street Chapel. I was called to give the introductory address. Dr. Nicholl prayed the ordination prayer. Mr. Burder gave the charge, and Mr. Rowland Hill preached, who was pleased to say, that this was a *downright catholic ordination*."

Thus far Mr. Buck's trembling hand conducted his narrative. Here it abruptly ends. The functions of nature failed him; and the thread of the story must be taken up and pursued by another. Mr. Buck with his congregation, occupied the Meeting-

house at Camomile-street, from Sept. 1802 till December 20, 1804. On the latter day they removed to Wilson-street Chapel, which then offered them excellent accommodation. But the comparatively "little one" becoming "a great city," demanded at length a more commodious place of worship. Nearly seven years of useful labour Mr. Buck spent, as pastor of the church assembling in Wilson-street. How his heart must have expanded with gratitude to God, as he beheld this interest of his own raising, gradually multiplying its numbers and extending its influence. His publications, which were continually issuing from the press, and reprinting, induced many to hear him, whom his solid and faithful preaching instructed and improved. We find him now taking a prominent station among his brethren, engaging in important occasional services, assisting at the ordinations of Missionaries and Pastors, and pleading the cause of various charitable and religious institutions. Of him we may truly say, that his popularity did not precede, but was rather the effect of his usefulness; it was therefore solid and increasing; the friends and admirers whom he attracted, he never alienated; he kept the ground which he had acquired, and every day added to the power and extent of his influence. His volumes of Anecdotes were perused with avidity. They still constitute the light reading of a considerable portion of the religious world, and amuse while their object is to instruct. Their chief merit is, that of judicious compilation, and pertinent reflections, suggested by the facts related. The rapid and continued sale of this

work excited a large share of public attention to its author. But the Theological Dictionary, his second and greatest performance, has contributed more than any of his works, to his reputation as a divine. A short and well written extract from the Preface will explain its nature and design.

"The plan of conveying knowledge by Dictionaries, has been long established and well received in the republic of letters. A dictionary, however, of a religious and ecclesiastical nature, was still a desideratum in the religious world: for although we have had dictionaries which explained Scripture terms, yet it is evident these could not embrace the history of the church, since the sacred canon was concluded, nor explain the numerous terms which have been used, nor indeed point out the various sects and denominations which have subsisted since that time."

"There may, doubtless, be defects in this publication which may have escaped my attention: but, whoever considers the various books that must have been consulted, the discriminations that were necessary to be made, the patient investigation required, and the toil of reflecting, transcribing, and comparing, must be convinced that it has been attended with no small difficulty. The advantages, however, which my own mind derived from the work, and the probability of its being useful to others, greatly encouraged me in its prosecution. Besides, to be active, to be useful, to do *something* for the good of mankind, I have always considered to be the honour of an intelligent being. It is not the student brought

up in metaphysical subtleties; it is not the recluse living in perpetual solitude; it is not the miser who is continually amassing wealth, that can be considered as the greatest ornaments or the greatest blessings to human society.—It is rather the *useful* than the *shining* talent, that is to be coveted."

"Perhaps it may be said, the work is tinctured too much with my own sentiments, and that the theology is too antiquated to please a liberal, philosophising and refined age. In answer to this, I observe, that I could do no other, as an honest man, than communicate what I believed to be the truth. It is a false liberality to acquiesce with every man's opinion, to fall in with every man's scheme, to trifle with error, or imagine there is no difference between one sentiment and another; yet notwithstanding this declaration, I trust the features of bigotry are not easily discernible in this work; and that while I have endeavoured to carry the torch of truth in my hand, I have not forgotten to walk in the path of candour."

In the year 1805, Mr. Buck published his Treatise on Religious Experience, and a charge delivered to Mr. Davison, at his ordination. Mr. D. was a member of the church at Wilson Street, and was introduced through its medium into the Christian ministry. In addition to him Mr. Buck mentions eight others, who went from under his pastoral care to engage in the same sacred and glorious work; among these are the names of Lacey, Dunn, and Heward. The charge to Mr. Davison is affectionate and judicious. The work on experience is too well known to the religious public, to require any lengthened

statement of its character and design in this place. A periodical critic has thus justly and succinctly described its merits. "There is much (says the British Critic) in this book on which every Christian may meditate with advantage; much reflection on religious subjects; much knowledge of the human heart, and of the manner in which divine grace affects and improves it, are here displayed."

In 1807 this indefatigable writer gave to the world the first edition of his Young Christian's Guide, or suitable directions, cautions, and encouragement to the believer in his first entrance into the divine life. A book more serviceable than this could not have made its appearance. It is certainly one of the most useful productions of the author's pen. One large impression after another has been eagerly purchased, and it will continue to be in request while pure and evangelical religion flourishes in the midst of us. In the same year Mr. Buck preached and published his excellent discourse on the importance of the Gospel Ministry. It was delivered at Hoxton Chapel, at the second anniversary meeting of the ministers educated at Hoxton Academy. The invaluable benefits which may accrue to the Christian church from a regularly educated ministry, forms the prominent subject of this sermon. Of the academy which gave rise to it, he observes, after speaking of the increase and prosperity of similar establishments,—"I cannot but congratulate the constituents of this institution. When I consider what it once was, when I review the increased liberality of the public for its support, when I think of the pains and the prudence taken to render it what

it is, and the favour God has given it in our Israel, I feel thankful. It has been a fountain, the streams whereof have made glad many a desert; and though it is true that the vessels and the pipes have been, like all others, only earthen ones, yet those who have had the management of them deserve great praise for giving them a right direction."

Again, he further remarks, "let us always countenance a regular gospel ministry, and be ever ready to patronize all those means which most effectually promote it. Some are too forward in puffing up those who despise learning; and because they can preach for an hour together upon some odd text, or spiritualize every thing they meet with in scripture, that, therefore, they do not stand in need of instruction from such institutions as these. But let us never encourage such a spirit; rather let us set our faces against it: and where we find pious and gifted young men, let us urge them to seek those advantages which these seminaries afford. I hope I can speak from experience when I say, that it was to me a blessing of such magnitude, as demands my gratitude so long as I have a being. Nor can I conceive what can be more reasonable than that a suitable portion of time should be devoted to the purpose of gaining knowledge. In vain it is said that it engenders pride, and other evil qualities: in my opinion, an academy has the power of making the volatile thoughtful, the enthusiast sober, the lethargic studious, and the proud humble; yes, I am thoroughly convinced if there be any one place in the universe calculated to pull down the pride of con-

ceited youth, it is an institution like this, where he sees, as in a glass, his own wretched picture."

The following letter bears the date of 1808, and is addressed from Bristol to some friends in London.

No. LIII.

"Dear Friends—You have heard no doubt by Mrs. B. of my safe arrival here; but I cannot say that I am so well as I was when here last year. Indeed the week before I came I was unfit to be out of the house; but I cannot bear to be confined from my work, while I can any way be engaged in it. But if I am not so well in health as at former seasons, I have not had less consolation, at least hitherto. It will, I know, afford you peculiar gratification to hear that my labours here in past time have been rendered successful. Two persons have been with me, whom I have every reason to believe have been called to a knowledge of the truth: one the last time I was here, the other the time before. The account that one of them gave me was nearly as follows: When Mr. Wilks was here some time ago, he had to bury a corpse at Kingswood, where he was going to preach. This man was one of the mourners; but such was his prejudice, that though he attended the funeral, yet he would not go into the place of worship; for, said he, "I thought myself as good as Mr. Wilks." Some time afterwards, however, as he was strolling about on the Sabbath day according to custom, he came near to the place, and without any kind of thought he stept in. So it

was ordered in Providence I was to preach. I took for my text those words, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." Under this sermon he was struck with keen convictions of the sinfulness of his past conduct. The word followed him and continually resounded in his ears, "Come to my banqueting house, come to my banqueting house, my banner over thee is love." He had been a very profligate character; he tried all he could to shake off these convictions; and getting among his old companions, he endeavoured incessantly to get drunk to drown reflection; but behold the impression was more powerful than the liquor; for all he could do, the liquor took little effect on him, nor could he lose his feelings. After this his distress was so great, he was almost in despair, and his eyes were swelled with weeping. One day (his family not being serious) he got into a kind of pit or quarry by himself; where he thought no eye was upon him but the Lord's. Here in the agonies of his soul he wept, he trembled, he prayed to the Lord to have mercy on him. At that very time a person that knew him, and who was a serious man, providentially came by, and observing he had been weeping, and knowing, most probably, he had been to hear, said to him, "*Why, what is the matter with thee? Why Buck has not overtaken thee, has he?*" With a heart broken he replied, "*Ah! he has, he has.*" Of course this was no small joy to his friend, who was 'glad to give him all the encouragement in his power. For five weeks, however, he was in a state of the greatest distress; till at last

the Lord was pleased to set him at a happy liberty; and from that time the gospel has been precious to his soul, and he seems as full of affection and gratitude as ever I saw a penitent in my life.

This man, with tears in his eyes, came to tell me this good news. So affected was he last Sabbath in hearing me preach, and the recollection of former feelings, that he could scarcely refrain from crying out, and the sweat ran down his hands as if they had been bathed. His wife is not a serious woman, and never hardly goes to place of worship; but nothing would serve but she must come last Sabbath to hear the unworthy insrument. "Well," said he to her in going home, "what dost thou think about this?" "Why," said she, "I do seem to like him." —"Aye, but dost know; dost understand any thing he said?"—"Why," says she, "he has told me all that I do do."—"Well," said he, "and what dost think, suppose thee shouldst die to night, what would become of thee?" "Why," said she, "according to what I have heard, I am afraid I shall go to hell."—Thus I have related in his own language, as near as I can recolleet, the account he gave me. —I feel much humbled, though I trust grateful, that God should make use of such an unworthy creature. I desire to give Him all the praise, because I am sure it is his own work. May the Lord go on to crown all my feeble attempts with success, and give me many souls which shall be my joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

"I hope to be home by the church meeting. The substance of this letter I have not communicated to

my dear Mrs. B. for want of room. If you will show it, therefore, I know it will be gratifying. Remember me kindly to all friends. Hope you are all well, and enjoying much of the divine blessing. I remain,

"Yours most affectionately in the Gospel,

"C. Buck."

Mr. Buck's volume of sermons on select subjects, made its appearance in 1810. The work is creditable to his talents, and is a fair specimen of his pulpit exercises. The subjects are highly important; and the sermon on Gospel Liberty is pre-eminently excellent.

In 1811, Mr. Buck and his congregation removed from Wilson Street to the City Chapel, in which he laboured until laid aside by that illness which terminated his active and useful life.

I remember congratulating him on taking possession of this strong-hold of Antinomianism, and driving the monster for ever away. I jocularly asked him if he did not find it almost impossible to cleanse the pulpit from its filthiness? With a smile he answered, that he did not attempt it, but turned it completely out to make way for that in which he had so long preached, and which was removed by his particular desire from Wilson Street.

In the May of this year, religious liberty obtained one of its noblest victories. The celebrated bill of Lord Viscount Sidmouth, intended to impose restrictions on the Dissenters and Methodists, experienced the fate which it justly merited. I am willing to hope that the noble proposer of this mea-

sure, was not fully aware of its pernicious and illiberal tendency. It was, however, sufficiently understood by all the enlightened friends of freedom, and opposed with a unanimity and energy which insured its triumphant defeat. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury was astounded at what he was pleased to call, "the flood of petitions which deluged the table of the House of Lords," and choked up all its avenues.*

* The dissenting ministers were greatly amused at the description which Lord Sidmouth gave of some of their fraternity—"Blacksmiths, coblers, tailors, pedlars, chimney-sweepers, and what not," and the following short fragment was in private circulation at the time of the failure of the bill. It purports to be a sermon, delivered by one of the ignorant, self-instructed teachers, who descended "from a chimney," to address his brethren on this interesting and joyous event.

"The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, he hath overturned the horse and his rider in the sea."

"My beloved, my text celebrates a triumph, a glorious triumph, a triumph in the cause of religion and liberty, obtained by God over the enemies of his church, and therefore it is quite suited to our present purpose. The Lord hath a second time overturned the horse and his rider in the sea. I shall leave you to read at leisure the history of the children of Israel, their oppressions and persecutions by Pharaoh, and the destruction of that tyrant, who sank like *lead* in the mighty waters; and I shall now speak a little of *our* great deliverance, and,

"First, Let me call your attention to the horse and his rider.

"This horse, my beloved, we may consider as Lord Sidmouth's *Bill*, and the rider as Lord Sidmouth himself. You know, my beloved, we have all our hobby-horses, and we are never so pleased as when we are riding them. This Bill, I am informed, was Lord Sidmouth's hobby when he was called the Doctor. He used even then to take an airing upon it occasionally, when his professional avocations would allow him opportunity.

Mr. Buck felt the most lively interest in common with his brethren, in the preservation of the inheritance which the mild and tolerant government

On becoming a viscount, he did not forget his old and faithful companion. For nine years past he has been in the habit of mounting it in the presence of his numerous friends, patrician and plebeian. My lords the bishops and most of the clergy have always complimented his lordship on the spirit of the animal, and his wonderful dexterity in managing it. They were peculiarly delighted when it kicked, capered, and pranced; and even some dissenting ministers, it is said, when the creature was at rest, used to approach it in secret, and laud the proportion of its parts, and its exceeding gentleness. They thought it was a very fine horse, and as his lordship assured them it could do no mischief, they, poor credulous souls, believed him. I have just intimated that this animal was high spirited and restive. This no doubt arose partly from his nature and partly from the tender solicitude with which he was reared. He has been known to stand in the finest stalls in the kingdom, and ostlers with black aprons and lawn shirt sleeves have often rubbed him down, and kept him in good case. Every body wondered for what important service this marvellous horse was reserved, till, about the beginning of the present month, (May) they were astonished by his snorting and trampling, and the manner in which he was caparisoned. They learnt very soon that he was destined, like another Rosinante, to bear a second Quixote, to war against peaceable travellers, and good subjects of his majesty's realm: and they were not a little terrified when they saw his noble rider, armed cap-a-pié, vault into the saddle. The dissenting ministers especially who had praised the gentleness of the animal, and the urbanity of his master, stood aghast. A general alarm was excited. Some wise heads however, who knew something of his lordship's courage and management, beheld him not as an object of terror, but compassion: they saw that he had ascended his horse for the last time, and they foreboded towards him nothing but a disastrous issue. To confirm these apprehensions, looking down Parliament-street, they beheld, very near the place in which his lordship meant to make

of the third William had bequeathed to the dissenters. Several pages of his narrative are employed in stating the design of the bill in question, and the subsequent extension of the toleration by the zealous and persevering efforts of the committee of the Protestant Society, and the deputies appointed by the churches in and about London, to watch over and to protect their liberties.

The noble sentiments in favour of universal religious freedom which were eloquently uttered in the House of Peers, during the debate which led to the rejection of Lord Sidmouth's measure, made a due impression on the public mind; and instead of an infringement of our rights, our privileges were increased. As he is now in a world where the applause or the censure of mankind cannot reach him, I feel myself impelled to pay a passing tribute to the late Earl Stanhope, for his zealous and manly efforts in this great cause. The following letter, ad-

his first attack, a tremendous flood; a flood which overwhelmed the House of Lords. The noble Viscount indeed seemed undismayed, he had dreamed of victory. He had the prayers of nearly the whole bench of Bishops, and all the intolerant spirits in the kingdom wished him 'God speed!' With such a horse, with such a host of friends, what did he care about a flood. Just as he was rushing in, expecting his right reverend brethren to follow him, he was amazed to find himself alone. There was not one voice to cheer him. The waves rose tumultuously around him. By a kind of fatality he went forward, possessing a wonderful facility at sinking—he sank like *lead*, in the mighty waters. Now there was something glorious in this, my beloved."

Cætera desunt.

It is supposed the black-faced orator, was suddenly called to extinguish the fire of some neighbouring chimney.

dressed by him to the Secretaries of the Protestant Society, in answer to a vote of thanks from that body, is his best eulogy, and I therefore feel great pleasure in presenting it to my readers.

"Berner's Street, May 29, 1811.

"Gentlemen,—I beg you will do me the favour to return my best thanks to Mr. Mills and the gentlemen who attended the General Meeting of Protestant Dissenters, and other friends to religious liberty, at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street, on Friday, the 24th instant, for the very kind and favourable manner in which they have, through you, gentlemen, been pleased to express their approbation of my conduct, with respect to the opposition that I gave to Lord Sidmouth's bill.

"I, however, do not feel that I deserve those thanks; for, I have simply done my duty, by opposing it in that House where I have been placed by the mere accident of birth. But those men do truly deserve the thanks and the gratitude of the public, by whose activity and well-timed exertions, so many hundreds of Petitions, thus respectably and numerously signed, were procured against that measure, in so very short a space of time. Unwise as the Bill was, it has been most salutary; inasmuch as it has convinced all mankind, that the friends to liberty of conscience are determined to lay aside all difference of opinion, and to make one glorious *common cause*, whenever the defence of their *rights* or religious liberty, shall require it.

"Stimulated by those principles of justice which

have uniformly actuated my conduct, I shall continue to defend the *unalienable right* of human nature, with respect to private judgment in matters of religion; and as a member of Parliament, I never shall condescend to solicit from any set of men in power, as a *favour*, that which I ever have held, and which I ever shall hold, as a right to be enjoyed by every man, *the most valuable right*, which he has received from that BEING INFINITELY HIGH, by whom he was created, and by whose providence he is hourly preserved.

"I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
"Your faithful servant,
"STANHOPE."

"To Mr. Thomas Pellatt, and
Mr. John Wilks."

Mr. Buck's next publication was occasioned by an event as mysterious as it was affecting—the death of the Rev. Thomas Spencer, of Liverpool. It was the lot of Mr. Spencer to attain a degree of celebrity altogether unprecedented in the annals of that class of ministers to which he belonged. The barriers of party were broken down before him, and churchmen and dissenters concurred to express their admiration of his talents, and were happy to avail themselves of his instructions. He equally delighted the polished and the rude, the learned and the illiterate, the aged and the young. Every rank seemed to consider him as its own appropriate preacher, and the greatest wonder of all is, when his popularity was at its zenith, he was only twenty

years of age. Never was a career so brilliant, and at the same time so useful. Alas! that it should have been so short. Six months after the above period, he was suddenly removed from the world. This unexpected and calamitous event produced "a shock approaching to consternation," not only in Liverpool, the immediate sphere of his labours, but in the metropolis, and in many other parts of England. Numerous sermons were preached throughout the country to embalm his memory, and improve his death. The inimitable lines of Virgil on Marcellus were never more happily applied than to this admirable youth, so beloved in life, so lamented in death. The work of Mr. Buck takes advantage of his station, his popularity, and his dissolution, to impress some of the most alarming and solemn subjects upon the hearts of his readers. It is entitled SERIOUS ENQUIRIES; or important Questions relative to this World and that which is to come; to which are added, Reflections on Mortality, occasioned by the death of the Rev. Thomas Spencer, &c. Of this performance the review of the Evangelical Magazine observes, "Mr. Buck's former publications were addressed chiefly to the religious world; he has now turned his attention to the careless and impenitent. The work is enlivened by anecdotes and sentences from the writings of wise and good men. We hope it will prove acceptable and useful, especially to the rising generation."

In the year 1812 commenced that illness, which

with a few temporary interruptions, issued in Mr. B's dissolution: when under its immediate influence, he thus wrote to a family of his friends:

No. LIV.

" Primrose Street, London, July 30, 1812.

" My dear friends—Though I am scarcely able to hold my pen, I do not like to let yours lie unanswered. I am glad to hear Mr. O. is better. Hope the air will be useful. I am sorry to inform you I gain no ground, but am still without appetite and without strength. Mr. Parkinson has called in a physician, Dr. Pett, who seems to be a clever man; he has ordered a new system of medicine; and at the same time gives me little hopes, unless a system of relaxation and exercise, on horseback, &c. can be adopted. This morning I left Shacklewell, by the advice of the doctor, on account of the paint. The weather too has been so very wet, that I have hardly been able to peep out. Never did I know a July so wet and so cold; I am glad to get to the fire, as if it were a cold frosty day in winter: I cannot keep myself warm. This has been a long affliction to me, on many accounts, nor is there any prospect at present of its removal. But what have I to do but to be patient. It is less than I deserve. I have however, preached one sermon since you have been away, which I hope and trust was edifying; at least I am sure it was comfortable, though with many tears!—What, preach say you, under all this indisposition? Yes, and I hope I shall never forget it!

But where do you think it was? and who the congregation? I will tell you. It was in bed; and myself only the hearer. I have since committed as much of it as I could to paper; but it was truly beneficial to the *whole* of the congregation. So, in the midst of our deep waters, some manifestations are afforded by our gracious Lord. Indeed, affliction is the time of communion, of prayer, of dependence, and of instruction too. When God is pleased to sanctify it to his people, then O how profitable. But this is what I want; I want not to be without affliction, if it be God's will; but I want to feel a sweet spirit of resignation under it, attended with a clear view of a saving interest in the Redeemer. When this is once obtained, then welcome life, welcome death, all is well. However, we must wait, till the promise be fulfilled. That you my dear friends may enjoy the Divine presence, in an abundant degree, is the most sincere prayer of

"Your's, very affectionately,

"C. Buck."

"Excuse my scrawl, for I am very unwell."

Notwithstanding his painful and lingering indisposition, he was not laid aside from his beloved employment of preaching; nor was he idle with his pen; for he prepared and published a Memoir of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Atkins. With this pious individual he had maintained a long and intimate friendship, and was therefore well qualified to write the narrative of his eventful life.

The following letter was written from Margate, and is dated June 18, 1812.

No. LV.

" My dear Friends—Through mercy we arrived safe at Margate on Saturday evening, about ten o'clock, but the journey was too much for me, and rendered me much worse than before. The first two nights I had scarcely any sleep at all, and my fever now seems but little abated; and as yet little or no appetite, though I sleep a little better. Of course I did not preach on Sabbath-day, though requested. We heard Mr. Atkinson in the morning, from 1 Pet. v. last part of 12th verse, and in the evening Mr. Young, at Lady Huntingdon's, from Heb. x. 19, 20.; both good discourses, and the places well attended.

" So here we are comfortable enough as to residence and society; *but* (Ah, this *but*; well, there must be a *but* in every thing) how little enjoyment is there, where appetite is gone and languor and pain pervade. But wherefore should a living man complain? We are not dealt with as we deserve! How might this life be embittered to us by ten thousand greater evils, and we at last be cut down as cumberers of the ground. I know not how you feel, but I am utterly confounded and ashamed at my own want of feeling. Naturally susceptible, as it regards all other things, but in spirituals how little affected, compared with their importance and excellency. I see, my dear friends, it may be easy to write books, preach sermons, hold meetings, &c.

but to carry a savour of divine things about with us; to have the mind pervaded and absorbed in them; to be losing sight of the world; to be divested of personal and domestic anxiety, and to have the affections constantly set above, this is not so easy! Yet how can we call ourselves Christians, without something of this? There is a sort of mechanical religion which some people have; which, as long as certain pins and wheels are kept in their place, *seems* to go on very well; but if any of these are lost, it stops, or at least proceeds very irregularly. Now you must know, I am very much afraid of this mechanical system; and want something (as you know our brother said) to go against wind and tide. "Thou shalt choose mine inheritance for me," is the lesson I want to learn. But why should I fill up my letter in writing about myself, unless I could give you some better intelligence? Well, I will have done.—We hope Mr. O. as the season advances, finds an increase of health. Were it not for that garden at Shacklewell, and for the patterns and flowers at Shoreditch, we should say, come down immediately; but as to this, we suppose there is no prospect. Hope all goes on well at Chapel, and that the supplies are acceptable. Pray present our kind regards to all the enquiring friends, and hope we shall have an interest in their supplications at a throne of grace. Wishing you much of the enjoyment of the Divine blessing, we remain,

"Your's, very affectionately,

"C. Buck."

" Mrs. B. will be glad if Mrs. Owen will see if all is well at Primrose Street. We hope to hear from you soon."

The year 1813 found Mr. Buck in a very delicate state of health, which he endeavoured to recruit by excursions into the country. The writer of these pages, meeting him one day, remarked the evident indisposition under which he laboured: nor can he ever forget the affectionate earnestness with which he replied, by entreating him to work while it is day, to improve his time and his talents, and especially to write and publish treatises on religion. Little did he then imagine, that it would fall to his lot to draw up this memorial of his friend's labours and virtues. To the Rev. John Hyatt, Mr. B. observed, when he was exceedingly ill, " *I* am falling a martyr to the pen; *you* will be a martyr to the pulpit." The one prediction was realized; the prayers of thousands will earnestly deprecate the fulfilment of the other. Preachers of Mr. Hyatt's powers, to excite religious feeling through vast congregations, and with his unabated zeal in employing those powers to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, are not the growth of every day.

Notwithstanding his heavy and long-protracted affliction, Mr. Buck this year prepared and issued from the press his Practical Expositor, the last, but not the least interesting of his works. " The intention of the author (says the Eclectic Review) in this work, was to form a practical exposition of various passages of Scripture, which should, at the

same time, comprize an interesting mass of biographical and historical information. So far as it consists of anecdote, we think the volume singularly unexceptionable. It is free from the objections which lie against religious story-telling in general, and is obviously of a useful tendency."

To Woburn, in Bedfordshire, Mr. B. retired for a few weeks, with a view to relax his public labours, and thus to recruit his strength. From this retreat he wrote the following letters to his friends in town:

No. LVI.

Extract of a Letter written at Woburn, July 30, 1813.

"Have you heard from Mr. Buck since he has been gone? methinks is the enquiry of some; to which you will now be able to answer, Yes. Well, how is he? Why he says, that on the whole he is better as to his appetite (meat excepted), but that one of his feet is exceeding painful, that he is unable to stand upon it; that he is comfortably situated enough with his friend Castleden; and that having taken a little work with him, he employs himself as usual when confined within; that since he has been here the weather has been wet, and continues unsettled; that he preached for Mr. C. Sabbath morning, on a subject not long since taken at the City Chapel from that text, 1 John v. 4.; that he rested in the afternoon, and was taken in a chaise to a village about three miles distant, and preached

to a full congregation from an old text, Job xv. 11., and returned to Woburn the same evening, very much tired; that his foot burns, looks very red, and prevents his taking that rest he could wish; that some of his friends are prescribing one thing, and some another, while others wish to call in the aid of a surgeon, in order, if possible, to set him upright; that he does not seem willing to employ a strange doctor, lest he should make some mistake, and by making an incision, confine Mr. B. in his chair at Woburn altogether; that at present he scarcely knows what to do, but that he wishes to wait with patience till relief shall be afforded; that he knows he deserves a much heavier affliction; and that it is necessary, for wise ends, that he should so long be continued in the furnace; that he feels much grief that he profits so little by afflictive events; that he can preach to others on the promises of support, and that he does not *always* enjoy himself what he could desire, yet with all his unworthiness he feels thankful in hearing of fresh instances of good being done, by what he has been enabled to send into the world, and that this encourages him to persevere, however some may think he has done enough; that if spared, and able to stand, he thinks of preaching at Woburn next Sabbath; and, after all, he likes his own people best, and likes to preach to them better than to any other; that he hopes to have an interest in their prayers, and that he desires his kind regards to them."

No. LVII.

To Mr. and Mrs. R.

" Woburn, Beds. 1813.

" Dear Friends—I am very much obliged to you for your kind epistle, and your good wishes expressed therein. Though I am somewhat better on the whole, yet I am far from being well. My legs are in a very bad state, very sore and painful, and am still blind with my left eye. I have neither been out nor preached once since I have been here. I find that winter is not a pleasant time to be in the country, and especially when one is not able to move about; all seems dreary and dull. I hope soon, therefore, to be in town. I am exceedingly obliged to our friends for their prayers, and for the kindness they have expressed; and I cannot but greatly feel the attention and affection of my brethren in the ministry. It is more than I deserve, and more than I expected. It is painful to me to be debarred from my public work; I long to resume it. The study has long been my habitation, and the pulpit my throne; but affliction has interrupted me in both. The will of the Lord, however, must be done. The furnace is necessary for God's ministers as well as for hearers; and I am certain it is for me, but I want practice to endure. I find it very different to preach, write, and converse about it, than it is to exercise it. O! that He who is the Giver of every good gift, may give strength according to the day.

" I am glad to hear you found Mr. S.'s sermon

profitable. It is a good thing to be stirred up to examine our evidences; for, alas! the things of this world, the cares of this life, too often darken them; but what an infinite mercy it is, that our God does not lay judgment to the line, nor righteousness to the plummet, that he knoweth our frames, and remembers that we are but dust. I should despair, if I were not assured that he does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. This we know, that even if we have been deceived, he hath said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Let us then, like Jonah, look again, that he may be merciful and gracious unto us.

"You say, in your letter, and justly too, that this is a world of trouble. Every body must feel something, and yet if we look around, we shall find many worse than ourselves.

"On Tuesday last a Mrs. D. (wife of an attorney in this place) a fine woman, in attempting to hang up a picture, her clothes caught fire, and was burnt to death. So we see, that in the midst of life we are in death. Happy are they who, in the hour of adversity and of death, can repose their confidence in God, and leave all to him. That this may be your privilege, is the most earnest prayer of

"Your's most affectionately,

"C. Buck."

"N. B.—I hope the children are all well. I am glad Mr. G. is better, and that his mind is so resigned, however it may terminate."

No. LVIII.

To Mr. and Mrs. A.

"Woburn, Beds. Dec. 6, 1813.

"Dear Friends—Your kind and frequent tokens of benevolence and regard call for some expressions of acknowledgment and gratitude. What can I say, but that you have my most ardent wishes for your happiness, both temporal and spiritual, and that the God of heaven may return to you a thousand fold, for every instance of liberality in his cause.

"You will no doubt be anxious to know how I am; as when last at your house I was greatly alarmed by a violent palpitation at the heart. I bore the journey, through mercy, better than I expected. Since I have been here, my appetite has been much better, my pain in the stomach lessened, and no return of the palpitation; but my legs are much worse, my eye nearly the same, and I have but little sleep. The doctor attends me constantly, and I have plenty of that medicine he thinks suitable, so that I think I can say I am better on the whole. The weather has been so bad, that I have not been out once since I have been here, nor even so much as thought of preaching. These silent Sabbaths try me much; I am out of my element; but the will of the Lord be done. Ministers must have a time for suffering, as well as for preaching. I know all is right, though the dispensation is painful. I want, however, like many others, to exercise a greater degree of faith, and to manifest a spirit of resignation to the will of him who doth all things well. For I cannot divest

myself of those anxieties which becloud the mind on the thoughts of mortality, of leaving tender connexions and a beloved family, as well as the church. Yet how wrong is this, since strength is promised according to the day. But how easy to talk, how hard to practise.

"But *however* it is with *me*, let me rejoice in the thought that it is well with you—Blessed in this world, and looking forward with joy to that which is to come. Some go through life on their hands and knees, while others are lifted up by a kind Providence, and carried safely and comfortably through. After all, however, it is communion with God that makes life sweet, whatever be the external condition. Favoured with this, none can make us miserable; destitute of it none can make us happy. That you both may enjoy this inestimable blessing in an eminent degree, is the most sincere prayer of

"Your's most affectionately,

"CHAS. BUCK."

No. LIX.

"At Mr. Castleden's, Woburn, Beds.
Dec. 14, 1813.

"My dear Friend—It is with very great pleasure I hear that you are better. I have been a brother companion with you in tribulation, often thinking I was on the borders of eternity; through mercy I feel somewhat restored, except that my blindness yet remains, and my feet are in a very bad state, being swelled, sore, and exceedingly painful. It is

near five weeks since I preached, nor have I been out once since I have been here. I long to be at my work again, should it be the will of God, but his will be done. We are not our own, but his, and he has a right to do as he pleases with us. He can get glory by our sufferings as well as by our services. He shows us too how easily he can do without us; that he can carry on his work without being indebted to us. But how necessary are these afflictions; we cannot indeed do well without them, and it is a pleasant reflection, that they are no marks of displeasure, but of love; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. How many have had reason to reckon their sanctified afflictions among their mercies. And shall not we, my dear friend, if spared, have to say, The Lord hath dealt bountifully with us? An old author says, we are something like the ball, the harder it is beat down, the higher it rises; so we, the harder we are beat down by affliction, the higher we shall bound in affection towards heavenly things. And blessed be God for that affliction which has this effect; which deadens us to the world, which crucifies our vain desires, and elevates our minds to a better world. I am very happy to hear that you have been so supported; that God has been so merciful to you in the time of your trouble. Now have you had a fresh proof of the reality of the religion of Jesus; now have you found the truth and sweetness of the sacred promises, and that you have not followed a cunningly devised fable. O, what a blessing to have an interest in the gospel of Christ.

By this we can live, by this we can walk and work, by this we can die. On what superior ground do we stand than those who, however great in this world, know nothing of God. But to whom are we indebted for all this? O, let us never forget the grace that sweetly forced us in. Let us strike the cheerful notes of praise, and say, The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.—That you may increase in strength and abound in consolation is the earnest prayer of,

"Yours, most affectionately,

"C. B."

"P. S. My kind regards to Mrs. Gander; hope she has and will have strength according to her day. He that hath delivered can deliver. On him, therefore may her confidence rest, and her mind be stayed."

No. LX.

"Woburn, Beds. Dec. 20, 1813.

"Dear Friend—My parcel, to my astonishment, contained no less than twelve epistles, and among the rest, I found one from a certain person with whom you have some acquaintance. I am very much obliged to her for her kind condolence with one who is sick, and blind, and lame. Indeed, if ever he stood in need of sympathy it is now, and he has great reason to rejoice that he is not destitute of it from his dear people. The hint you dropped has for some time occupied my attention, and had I

staid much longer here would have been adopted; but hope very shortly, if I do not preach, at least to show my face, and answer inquiries in my own person. The country, in winter, I find not very favourable to invalids; I have not been able to get out at all. My appetite is not so good as it was, and my feet are very bad indeed; but I must not complain, it might have been still worse. O! that I could but think more of my mercies, and less of my trials; I know which are the greatest of the two. How many around us are more the subjects of distress than ourselves. Last Thursday evening, a Mrs. May, a fine woman, and wife of an attorney in this place, in attempting to hang up a picture, her clothes caught fire, and she was burnt to death. She was not, it is said, even a professor of religion. Reflecting on the case of others, how thankful ought we to be in regard to ourselves, however low our condition.

"I hope you will find the divine presence in your new habitation. Make it a place of prayer, and then I am sure that will be the case. Cares, and troubles, and wants will be found at Hoxton as well as at Gravesend; but an attention to Philippians, iv. 6, 7. will bring through all. That the blessing of the Most High may be enjoyed continually by you, is the sincere prayer of,

"Yours, most affectionately,

"C. B."

"Forgive my trembling hand, for I am but weak. I directed this to Mr. Owen, not knowing how to direct for you at Hoxton. Mr. and Mrs. Castleden beg me to present their kind respects to you."

Of the following year he has left no memoranda, at least none that can interest the reader. He was engaged in revising and publishing new editions of some of his works. He took several journies, and wherever he went, and his health would permit, he sowed the good seed of the kingdom. Arriving at Brighton, in the month of August, the author earnestly requested him to preach, but he reluctantly declined, saying that his medical friends had absolutely forbidden him. He was therefore a hearer. The subject was derived from those words of the apostle Paul, "No afflictions at the time are joyous, but grievous; yet afterwards they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness." After the service, he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the doctrine of the text, and the solemn and plain manner in which it was treated, and urged the preacher to persevere in the good work. It was the last time I saw him.

The tidings which reached me the following year were, that Mr. B. was dangerously ill, that little or no hope was entertained of his recovery. He was seized with this affliction on the 7th of April, and on the 8th of May was confined to that bed from which he was never to rise again. His last sermon to the people of his charge was preached on Tuesday evening, April 4, from Heb. iv. 1. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." And his last sermon in this world was delivered at Kennington Chapel, on the following evening, from 2 Cor. i. 7. "And our hope of

you is stedfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

However diligently and wisely Mr. Buck discharged the active duties of his station, and no man ever exhibited a steadier or a brighter example of uniform excellence, his last scene of patient suffering and holy resignation to the divine will, reflected the highest honour on his principles, and produced the deepest impressions on the hearts of his friends.

> ———"Nothing in his life
> Became him like the leaving it; he died
> As one that had been studied in his death."

To those around him he observed, with a sweet composure of mind, and a heavenly smile on his countenance, "Let us rejoice in Christ, he has done all things well, we shall only part for a little season, and the grand theme of our souls will be, 'Not unto us.' Yes, our wonder will be through all eternity that he loved us." Mrs. Buck observing to him that the past Sabbath was the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, with strong emotion he replied, "We shall sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb to part no more." Oh! what a blessed hope. To some present he said, he himself had been witness of many death-beds of saints, on which they have often said, "Is this dying?" I now myself experience that Jesus can make a dying bed as soft as downy pillows are. Some one observing to him what a mercy it was he knew and felt his interest in

Christ; with ecstasy he exclaimed, "O! yes, I do feel that Christ is precious to my soul; yes, this is our mercy, Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." With much rapturous joy of soul he said, "Eternity will be unfolding the mysteries of his grand and divine purpose of love and mercy in the saving of man, and his display of the divine Godhead. Oh! how sweet, divinely sweet, when we can say, 'It is not left to chance, but Divine Providence.'" One observing that he would soon meet those whom he loved, and worshipped with while on earth, "Ah! (said he) to see our friends there will be a happiness, but Oh! to find ourselves safely arrived in those blest regions—glorious thought!

> "Sin, my worst enemy before,
> Shall vex my eyes and ears no more."

"Oh! what a great and glorious salvation!—Sinner saved by sovereign grace." A friend standing by, mentioning to him a person about to join the church at Grub Street, and that his writings had been a great means of bringing him to God, Mr. B. remarked, "If it be so delightful to hear of souls being brought to Jesus here below, what will it be to behold them as jewels in our crown above." Unto his friends around him, he observed, "What a great thing it was to bear a testimony unto those truths, which he had been preaching unto others; this I now feel, blessed be God." To his son Samuel he said, looking stedfastly at him, "He hoped he would know and serve *Samuel's God;* that," said he, addressing him, "will be your honour and your

glory." Another time he observed, speaking of the affliction of the church in being deprived of its minister, that he hoped and trusted it would be much in prayer for the cause of God, for if the Lord took one of his creatures, and more especially his ministers, it was for the promotion of his glory, and the accomplishment of his grand designs.

To those near him he spoke very largely on the blessing which attends those who make religion their early choice; he spoke here of his own experience, and said he never knew happiness till he found Christ to be his Saviour. He exhorted them to persevere in the use of those means, which would, by the blessing of the Almighty, establish them in grace, and in every good word and work, and particularly recommended frequent attendance at the mercy-seat, "for (said he) don't be discouraged, while you ask with submission, and in the name of the Intercessor, but come again and again, and you will find such sweetness attending this ordinance, that will resign your mind to all circumstances; here (continued he) am I, lying on the bed of severe affliction, and if it were not for the consolations which the presence of the Lord affords, what a miserable creature I should now be; certainly I have many blessings, for which I desire to be very thankful; but what are they to a dying man, when compared to God, to heaven, to an eternity of bliss? And now, my dear friends, let me intreat you to read your bible diligently; do not let trifles prevent the performance of this duty; read a portion of it every morning, and you will find it will prepare

your minds for the events of the coming day; it will preserve your temper, and will give you that serenity, or as it is called, that peace of mind which passeth all understanding. Observe how inconceivable this peace is as to expression; and yet, blessed be God, it is that which is both known and felt by the Christian. And let me now request you to remember these observations, with the person who made them, when you read your bible. 1st, Who is the Author?—God. 2d, To whom is it sent?—To fallen miserable man. 3d, For what purpose?—For the salvation of man; to raise him from scenes of woe, to the hope of immortal glory.—I have loved the bible (said he) from my youth, and I have carried one constantly in my pocket, ever since the age of twelve years, and if it were not superstitious, I would have one in my coffin when I die. But I bless God that I have the hope of going to that place where the beauties of the bible shall be unveiled in their fullest glory. I have always read it with pleasure, and I never remember perusing any part of it without feeling a fresh sensation of gratification, or discovering some new beauty. My dear friends, when you are in retirement take your bible in your hand, and pray for a blessing upon the reading of it, plead earnestly that you may be enabled to feel in your heart, and practise in your conduct its blessed truths; and I can assure you while you do this with a right spirit, you will never fail in receiving an abundant blessing. Love God; seek after him; delight much in reading his word, and in supplicating his presence, and you will find

he will never forsake you, but will be ready to succour you. I have sought after him, and I can safely say I never knew him to turn a deaf ear to my petition. 'Tis true he has laid me on the bed of pain and languishing; but what of that? His presence makes my situation easy, and I would not part with his smiles to become a monarch. He has permitted me to speak in his name, and I thank him it has not been in vain. When I look back on my past life, I only regret I have not often been more active in the service of so good a Master; and I would rather see my own children sitting on a dung-hill, and in the enjoyment of God's presence, than to see them exalted to the highest station, without his fear in their hearts." Mr. B. then spoke of the effect which the affliction of his people had upon his mind, and though he felt regret at the separation, which was about to take place, yet he rejoiced greatly in the hope of their joining him in the Church above. He then assured those around him of an interest in his prayers, and again warmly exhorted them to persevere in their determination to follow Christ.

During the few last days he was observed to be much in prayer. Those words of Dr. Watts dwelt much upon his mind, and he frequently recited them with much pleasure, in the hope of that bliss, which he expected hereafter to realize:

> "Oh! glorious hour, Oh! bless'd abode,
> I shall be near and like my God."

Not long before his death, he appeared to have possessed somewhat more strength than he had done

for some time, and raising himself up in his bed, he exclaimed with emphasis, "Now I know, now I know," alluding no doubt to those words of St. Paul, 'I know in whom I have believed,' &c. which a friend standing by repeated, and said, "You know in whom you have believed?" to which he earnestly replied, "Yes, yes." His last words were addressed to Mrs. Buck, in which, (as is evident) feeling for her situation, he recommended her to that God, who who will take care of the widow and the fatherless; and with earnestness and pious assurance, said, "My love, grieve not, fret not, the *Lord will provide;*" and soon after bid adieu to the sorrows of humanity, exchanging a life of pain and affliction, for a never ending eternity of ease and felicity.

This event, so deeply felt by his family and numerous friends, but so happy to himself, took place on Friday, the 11th of August, 1815. On the Thursday following, his remains were conveyed from his late residence, in Primrose Street, amidst an amazing concourse of people, every where collected in the streets through which the funeral passed, to the City Chapel, attended by ten ministers, his medical friend, his relations, and nearly all the male members of his church. On arriving at the chapel, the body was taken in and placed upon the communion table. A hymn being sung, the Rev. Mr. Castleden, of Woburn, read part of the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians; after which Dr. Simpson prayed. The procession then moved to the place of interment at Bunhill-fields. Here Dr. Winter delivered the funeral oration. The Rev. Matthew Wilks

preached the funeral sermon on the evening of the following sabbath, to the bereaved church and congregation, from the text chosen by the deceased, Psalm cxvi. 7. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

The following is the Inscription on the Tablet:

Sacred to the Memory of

THE REV. CHARLES BUCK,

Whose Spirit, made meet for Glory,

Was taken to Immanuel's bosom the 11th of August, 1815,

In the 44th year of his age.

The Church and Congregation collected by him, and which enjoyed his Ministerial labours for 18 years, have erected this Tablet as a token of their high esteem for his Character.

"The memory of the just is blessed."

CONCLUSION.

A delineation of Mr. Buck's character may perhaps be expected from the pen of his biographer. But who can have read the preceding pages without beholding the prominent features of his mind, and the distinguishing qualities of his heart? The gentleman who preached his funeral sermon knew him most intimately, and I shall therefore content myself with quoting his testimony to the worth of his friend.

Mr. Wilks considered the text which the deceased had selected as the basis of a funeral discourse, as in his own view admonitory to himself, his wife, his children, and his flock and in addressing the deeply afflicted congregation, he observed,

"1. Was it necessary that your dear pastor should adopt this language as admonitory to his own heart? of whom I can say before the omniscient God, that I knew not a man in the world to whom it is less applicable. The regular uniformity of his habits, the pleasing urbanity of his manners, the amazing equanimity of his temper, the uncommon aptitude of his mind to every thing spiritual, benevolent and good, seem almost to preclude the possibility of his admonishing his spirit to return unto a God, with whom he appeared to live in a constant and happy communion. Yet he knew

best. Of all the works in which a man can be employed, there is none calculated to minister so much refined pleasure as the punctual and regular discharge of the pastoral functions, especially if God give that pastor numberless seals to his ministry, and he is permitted to anticipate meeting them at the right hand of Jesus. Yet there may be some interruption of this sacred, this exquisite delight. The fears, the temptation of his flock, the troubles and perhaps restless tempers of some of them, tempers so opposite to his own holy and peaceable spirit, might interrupt the full enjoyment of this inestimable good. Besides, he was a man,—having all the feelings of human nature. His reliance upon and enjoyment of God may have been interrupted by human and distressing fears, respecting a widow and numerous family, bereaved and unprovided for, exposed to all the vicissitudes and cares of life. He was a sinner, like other men; and though sin did not appear, sin was felt: where this detestable evil works and struggles, it must embitter the spirit and hurt the peace of a holy man, and the holier he is, the sooner his peace is broken. Hence an apostle was constrained to cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' Your pastor did the same. His wife, seeing him look not so happy, one day just before his death, asked him how he was; he said, "not very comfortable."—"What makes you so uncomfortable, my dear, have you not God for your friend?"—"Ah! (he replied) I am so unworthy—I am very unworthy." A deep sense of these things will often urge the

exclamation of the text even from the best of men. They must feel all the vibrations of mind, and all the contrary and peculiar influences arising from their present condition. A wife and a Saviour, children about me, and heaven above me. This world with its allurements, celestial glory with its attractions; the old man with his affections and lusts, the new man created anew in Christ Jesus, all operating with different and even hostile tendencies, will often force the believer thus to address his soul, "Return unto thy rest." Perhaps it was under these sensations that the text came with peculiar emphasis to the mind of our departed friend and brother. And considering at the same time the innumerable mercies, temporal and spiritual, which had crowned his life, he felt the impulse of gratitude, and immediately added, "for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

"2. The text may be taken as admonitory to his widow. My dear sister, sincerely do I pity you. You have known what the pain of separation and dissolution of connubial ties are. You are now as it were at sea and in a storm. Your situation is perilous, and your mind may be agitated to excess. How suitable then is the admonition to you, my friend. Your husband is gone to heaven. You, I trust, have a place there also. Your God liveth. He is the husband of the widow, all your resources are in him, and he can make all grace to abound. Nothing is so calculated to bear up your mind, and exalt your spirit, and compose your frame, as the recollection of this text, "Return unto thy rest,

O my soul." You had much pleasure in your husband, but there is infinitely more to be derived from your God and Saviour. Your husband is dead, and only the recollections of your former joys remain. "But blessed be my rock," return unto your rest. Trust God's care, and you shall prove it; trust God's promise, it shall support you; trust God's arm, it shall bear you up; trust God's Son, he shall be your salvation; trust God's spirit, he will give you wisdom to manage your affairs with discretion, and govern your family with prudence. You now want the strength of two minds in one. God can give it. You want a masculine mind; you want a decided and persevering mind. "But I am the widow's God," he says, "be that your staff, that your rest."

"3. The text is admonitory to his children. My dear young friends, I have just been following your affectionate parent to heaven, and have imagined that while he looks upon the face of Jesus, and of many of his beloved people who went before him, he casts an eye to the vacant mansions there, to see if any were reserved for his beloved children, looking for Charles's and Thomas's and Samuel's seat. For you he prayed; you he admonished; for you he wept, laboured, and felt. My dear children, he is now happy; and methinks I hear the voice of the Eternal addressing him in this language, 'I will be a God to thy seed.' O realize the delightful vision. Return to the only adequate rest of an immortal nature. Say, 'my father is in heaven, my mother is going thither, a multitude of my young friends have the same destiny in view, and how

will my father look, if at the judgment day, he shall stand at the right hand of God, and see any of us at the left. If happy spirits could tremble there, it would be at such a sight as this.'

"4. The text may be admonitory to you his church. My dear friends, you stand in a peculiar relation to him. You were originally gathered together under him; many of you from the wilderness of this wicked world, and others were as sheep without any regular shepherd, until he came and preached to you. I shall never forget the aptitude of his mind to carry any thing into execution. We were one day together, and our conversation was directed to the chapel in Princes Street, and how badly they were going on there. I observed, I think, it would make an excellent place for an independent congregation, if some good man would take it. He did not open his mouth to me at the time; but the first thing I heard upon the subject after this was that Mr. Buck had taken Princes Street Chapel, was preaching to the people, and in eight months had formed a church. He afterwards told me, that he silently took the hint, and acted upon it immediately. You are the fruits of his labours. You have lost one of the best of pastors. You will be well off if you get almost such a one. God is able to make his mercies abound towards you. Return him the whole. Be wise, be prudent, be united, be of one mind, one spirit, one heart; let there not be amongst you many masters, let there be no *wild opinions*, but maintain the unity of the faith. You have suffered by his illness, do not suffer by his

death. God will appear for you, if your eyes are directed to him."

To his brethren in the ministry, Mr. Buck's Memoirs present an alluring example; and his early departure from the field of labour, reads to survivors a most impressive lesson. We must soon, very soon follow him to the great tribunal, let us then walk in his steps. To be active and useful, is to be happy. He who is incessantly labouring in his Master's cause, bears the eternal mark upon him that he belongs to God, and may fearlessly exclaim, "I am free of the universe, and I am ready to go to any world to which my Redeemer may command me, certain, that every where, in height or depth, he will acknowledge me for ever."

FINIS.

On page 129 we inadvertently copied an error from the English edition. In line 16 from the top read *justifying* for *justified;* and in 17, *justified* for *justifying*.

Job 24.22 15-11